NOVEMBER 20th, 1969 — No. 931
25th YEAR OF PUBLICATION

Jan.
Rev. J. W. Van Weelden
17 Tweedsmuir Ave. E.
Chatham, Ont.



CALVINIST-CONTACT

CHRISTIAN WEEKLY



Address all communications to: Calvinist-Contact, P.O. Box 312, Station B, Hamilton, Ont. • Authorized as Second Class Mail. Registration number 0-0451.

Church and Sect

by Rev. JOHN D. TANGELDER

II. The Origin of Sects.

Most sects and sectarianism itself descend from the apocalyptic and anabaptistic wings of the Reformation. (27) The world had to be shunned. The Christians were on the pilgrim way to the New Jerusalem and nothing was supposed to detain their journey. Their program was separatism and not reformation. There had been no church for centuries, but only the false Babel, and Babel had to be left. The true church was the gathering of the visible saints, who were baptized on their own profession of faith. (28) The excessive left wing movement of the Protestant Reformation should be appraised from a wider background than the 16th and 17th centuries can afford.

As an illustration we may look back for a moment to a famous heretic of the second century, Montanus, who with the two women Prisca and Maximilla, provides the classical example of that pentecostal enthusiasm which has broken at intervals into the history of the church. Montanus and his followers had an extravagant belief in the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit, "to whose action they have abandoned themselves in complete passivity like the violin vibrating under the bow; and so emphasizing the continuance of prophecy in the life of the Church, with its spasmodic ecstasies, glossalia and kindred manifestations." (29) Montanism is regarded therefore as the prototype of many religious revivals which have become separatist movements eventually. Montanism does live very strongly in such Pentecostal groups which do believe in private revelation and in hyper individualism.

Montanism as a spiritual principle is a recurring phenomenon in the history of the church. The Pentecostal movement itself will eventually disappear as it is slowly moving in the direction towards becoming a church. No movement can survive on emotionalism and individualism alone. (30)

IV. Sects — Cultural Background.

Horton Davies characterizes sects as "the religion of the hard-pressed and frustrated, who, without such faith and the company of their fellows at the bottom of the scale, would be utterly defeated." (31) Though I do think this description generalizes too much, it bears out some important points. Sects and sectarianism are part of a cultural phenomenon. Several factors have contributed to the rapid spread of denominationalism and sects on the North American continent.

In the background of many sects you find a strong economic influence. Sects are often a haven for the poor where they find recognition and fellowship. (32) Yet one must be careful not to overestimate the economic influence. This mistake has been made by many American historians. (33) Movements such as Christian Science and Unity have mainly a middle class membership.

Prof. Dr. K. J. Popma accuses the Pentecostal movement of having a hostile attitude towards culture. It fosters cultural poverty "through its preference of the spectacular and extra-ordinary." (34)

America has always been fertile soil for sects, cults and sectarian movements. Though we must always remember that their origin have their roots in Europe. The American frontier was characterized be emotionalism, fierce individualism and anti-intellectualism. (35) This spirit lent itself to separatism. The splits within sects and denominational splits are partly explained from that background.

VI Sects and Sectarianism — Reactionary movements.

Sects and sectarianism cannot be completely explained by all the factors mentioned sofar. Sects and sectarianism did not arise from a vacuum. They came out of the church. They point their fingers accusingly at the church and speak about her failures. Time and again the church has walked upon dangerous paths. She has often opened her doors to rationalism. The Word of God has often been weighed and found wanting by the church which has the sacred duty to proclaim that Word. God has been captured by the church instead of the church being captured by Him. National causes were defended by the church. A gospel without the cross has been proclaimed from many pulpits. The preaching of the Second Coming, the hope of the church, has been neglected. The church no longer watched, worked and prayed for the glorious Second Coming of her Lord. Church membership has been too soft and easy. Congregational life failed to provide understanding and fellowship. Sects and sectarianism must also be understood from this background. These shortcomings of the church are not novelties of the ancient past but do occur with frightening frequency in the present. The spiritual climate today in our society does nurture sects and sectarianism. If churches do not take the Biblical message seriously members will leave and seek spiritual food and certainty somewhere else. A church which does not take the Bible seriously as the revealed Word of God cannot be expected to be taken seriously. (36)

VI. A Critique on Sects and Sectarian Theology.

a. Sectarian usage of the Bible.

Biblicism is here the key word. In the many discussions I have had with sectarians, I found that the Bible was honoured as God's Word. This is commendable, but the Biblical message is narrowed down to Biblical truths. The authority of the Bible is claimed but not for all of life. Biblical authority is limited to a believer's spiritual life. Biblical studies tend to become a gathering of proof texts. The studies in the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ in such circles are frequently fanciful. It is amazing what interpretations are given to some passages in the Old Testament. Ezekiel 38:8, 9 states "After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it's brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee." T. Myron Webb in his booklet "Startling Prophetic Events" explains the passage this way: "The balance of this chapter is so descriptive it needs little comment. Twenty-five hundred years ago Ezekiel said that Russia, in league with many other nations, would come against Israel "as a cloud to cover the land." This undoubtedly intimates the invasion will be from the air, followed in the usual order by land forces." (37) In Ezekiel 38:1-6 Mr. Webb finds clear references to Russia, Moscow and Tobalski, Germany. Ezekiel 39:1-5 prophesies a battle with "guided missiles, carrying atomic and hydrogen war-heads." (38) Prophetic literature abounds, but the Bible seems to be a limited book in practical day by day living.

b. Sects and the Bible.

Sects are not satisfied with sola Scriptura. They must have more than Scripture affords. The Jehovah's Witnesses say that they take the Bible seriously. But they take Scripture out of context and glue texts together to make up their own prophetic views. They also recognize extra revelation. The leaders in Brooklyn seem to have a special source of revelation from where they draw their ideas.

The Mormons have their books of Mormon, the Christian Scientists their "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" by Mary Baker Eddy. And there are many other groups which have their own particular brand of books to shed extra light on the Bible. These books are without exception the basis of sect theology. These works are not innocent additions but they overshadow and even lord over the Bible. God can no longer speak on His own. He has to speak according to the directions of the sect.

Sects are self deceiving. They promise security through their extra-Biblical material but their security always proves to be that of a soap bubble. Sects have turned their backs to the God of the Scriptures and stand thus under the judgment of God.

c. Sect — man's outreach to God.

For the sect member salvation by grace is not sufficient. He cannot find satisfaction in the simplicity of the gospel. He must find out more and more about the "Father's business" before he can come at peace with the Father.

Sectarian Pentecostalism falls prey to the same problem. Much is said about salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ. But before you are actually accepted as a full fledged member of Pentecostalism you have not only to experience the first birth (regeneration) but the baptism of the Holy Spirit as expressed in the speaking of tongues. If you don't experience the speaking of tongues you just don't belong to the initiated. Some of the more extreme Pentecostal groups go from one planned Revival meeting to another. It is always a mystery to me why a Holy Spirit Revival can be announced for a certain date.

Sects may preach grace but they add some strange things. The Seventh Day Adventists say "You must keep the Sabbath instead of the Sunday otherwise you will never enter through the pearly gates," and Jehovah's Witnesses say "You have to be a minister for the Watch Tower, fulfil your obligations before you can escape the terror of Armageddon." The focus is placed on man's activities and not upon what God does for man in His grace. **Man decided** what God has to do to save man. The key is salvation by works and not faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary.

d. Sect-concept of sin.

In the theology of the sects sin has become sins. This is a natural conclusion of their desire to gain salvation through works. The fulness of God's grace can only be seen in the light of the depth of man's sin. Sin which reaches to the depth of man's existence is not taken seriously anymore. Sects talk about specific sins. They are moralistic in their shunning of all types of worldly temptations which can be overcome in obedient living to rules and regulations. The justice and the wrath of God executed on Golgotha is not seen in its full dimension. Some sects devaluate the significant event on Golgotha. The awesome judgment is made light and Christ's work of redemption is robbed of its full significance. Some sects even deny the reality of the cross. Such sects as Christian Science take away the reality of the cross and replace it with man's own ability to overcome his own problems. There is no feeling of enmity with God which must be reconciled. Rather, man extends a hand of welcome and God is supposed to grasp it. Sect theology is basically a theology without a cross, and a bloodless salvation.

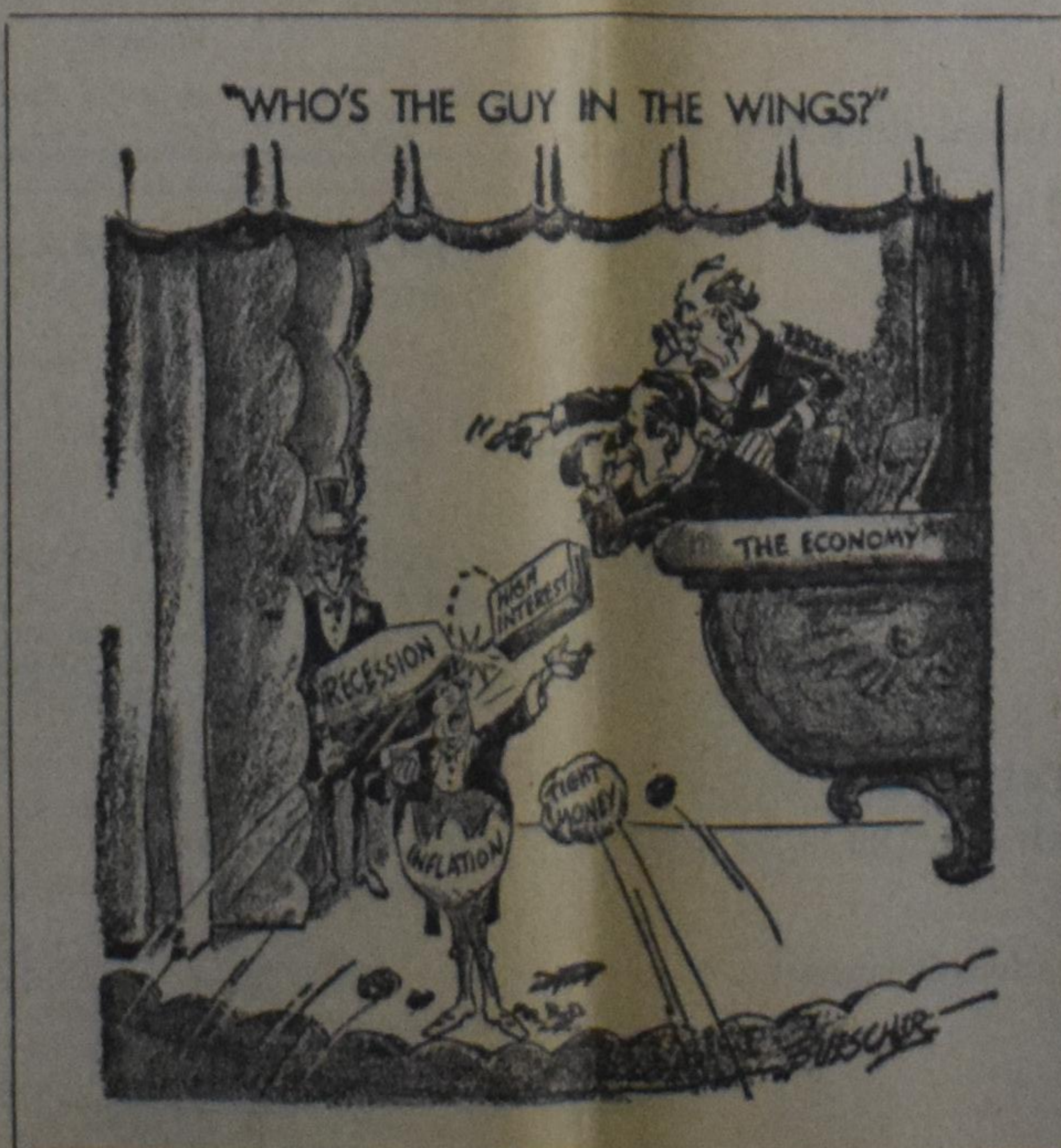
e. Sect — no sense of history.

Sects have placed themselves outside of the line of history. They have cut themselves off all the rich experiences accumulated during the history of the church. According to the sects, the church has had a brief period of healthy growth and after that darkness and chaos reigned until their own sect brought the message of hope to light again. The birth of the sect was the birth of new light. For the Mormons it was the year 1829 and for the Jehovah's Witnesses it was the year 1874 when Charles Tay Russell founded the new religious organization the "Zion's Watch Tower Society." God's grace is here very limited indeed. Where was Christ before 1829 of 1874? Was God not working in one person during all those centuries? Was everyone lost until the Mormons or the Jehovah's Witnesses arrived on the scene of history? Here is a theology of pride. God has had in their mind no dealing with the church but only with their own sect.

Much more could be said about church and sect. I have only touched upon some of the basic issues. When you study sects and sectarianism you must first determine your own understanding of the church. The critique on sects and sectarianism is based on Reformational Theology. This article offers an attempt to come to an understanding of the relationship between church and sect, and it should be understood only as that.

Bibliography:

(27) Walsh, p. 315. (28) cf. C. Smeenk. Christelijke Sociale Beginselen. Vol. II. p. 194. (29) J. S. Whale. The Protestant Tradition. p. 209. (30) cf. Ibid. Part III. (31) Horton Davies. p. 21. (32) Elmer T. Clark. The Small Sects In America. pp. 16-18. (33) cf. S. D. Clark. Church and Sect in Canada. (34) Dr. K. J. Popma. Levensbeschouwing. Deel 5. p. 43. (35) cf. Canadian Sociological Perspective. p. 575. (36) Kurt Hutten. Geloof en Sekte. Het Sektarisme als anti-reformatorisch geloofsverschijnsel, zijn doelstelling en zijn tragiek. blz. 124-133. (39) T. Myron Webb. Startling Prophetic Events. p. 20. (38) Ibid. p. 21.



Brief from the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools

On October 22 the **Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools** (O.A.C.S.) presented an important Brief to the Full caucus of the Government of Ontario. The brief requests Government support for the 46 schools — 8100 students — affiliated with the **O.A.C.S.**

The following are some significant extracts from the Brief presented:

1. The Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (O.A.C.S.) speaks through elected representatives on behalf of forty-six society-operated, non-denominational, christian, public schools which educate 8,102 Ontario students.
2. The purpose of this presentation is to encourage the Government of Ontario to promote FULL equality of educational opportunity for all the boys and girls in Ontario. WHEN THIS GOVERNMENT USES THE WORDS EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IT MEANS EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY WITHIN A GOVERNMENT OWNED AND FINANCED SYSTEM AND, NOT EQUALITY OF PARENTAL OPPORTUNITY IN CHOOSING A SYSTEM OF EDUCATION.
   There is serious inequality of opportunity when you consider the severe financial penalty paid by parents who send their children to (e.g.) a Christian or a Jewish day school. They pay their full proportionate share for public school education and in addition must finance their own schools with tuition rates averaging $500 to $600 per child. More serious is the plight of the many who cannot even send their children to the school of their choice because they cannot afford it. Full equality of educational opportunity would give all parents freedom — WITHOUT THE ATTACHMENT OF FINANCIAL OR OTHER PENALTY — to choose the educational system they would have for their children. To limit educational freedom and equal educational opportunity to freedom within a system children are economically forced to attend is ludicrous. It deprives many citizens of true freedom of choice in education.
3. Through our presentation of brief and other materials and via our many, many personal visits we had hoped to effect a quiet change of this government's restrictive policy regarding the financing of education in the Province of Ontario. We protest and will continue to protest this serious injustice; an injustice not only to supporters of O.A.C.S. affiliated schools but to all groups who have established schools but do not receive government support.
   It is true that our quiet protests and suggestions for change have been before you both collectively and individually, "ad nauseam" as it were. It is also true that we have been received and listened to politely. But this misses the point. IT IS PRECISELY BECAUSE THIS GOVERNMENT ALLOWS AN AIRING OF COMPLAINTS WITHOUT FEELING IT NECESSARY TO TREAT THEM SERIOUSLY THAT OUR UNREST IS GROWING. It would seem that the government is guilty of naïveté in assuming that all it need do is permit the disgruntled to beef at regular intervals, thus providing a forum for draining off pressures that will keep the citizens happy. The increasing number of violent explosions in our society indicate that pressures cannot be drained off this way. We believe that this government

(Continued on page 12)

For a hundred that can bear adversity, there is hardly one that can bear prosperity.

— Carlyle.

VROUWELIJKE PREDIKANTEN DEFINITIEF TOEGELATEN

De gereformeerde synode in Nederland heeft zich thans met 65 tegen 3 stemmen definitief uitgesproken voor toelating van vrouwelijke predikanten. Tegen stemden de Zeeuwse afgevaardigde ds. P. van Til en de beide afgevaardigden van de Altreformierte Kirche in Niedersachsen. Inmiddels zal de synode zich nog nader beraden over enige kerkordelijke bepalingen. Het gaat daarbij o.a. om de vraag of vrouwelijke predikanten al dan niet van haar ambt ontheven moeten worden wanneer zij in het huwelijk treden. Ook was de synode het nog niet eens over de vraag of de toelating zonder meer kan plaatsvinden of dat er bij moet worden gesteld, dat het om "een voor haar geëigende taak" gaat. Aan de betrokken synodecommissie is opdracht gegeven hierover de synode nog nader te rapporteren.

★

BEYERS NAUDÉ IN DE GEREF SYNODE

Het werelddiakonaat van de gereformeerde kerken in Nederland heeft besloten gedurende drie jaar een bedrag van f 50.000 per jaar te geven aan het Christelijk Instituut voor Zuid-Afrika voor het theologisch onderwijs aan bantoe-predikanten. Dit werd in de synode meegedeeld tijdens de behandeling van de diakonale zaken, waarbij ds. C. F. Beyers Naudé uit Johannesburg, de directeur van het Christelijk Instituut, als gast aanwezig was.

Ds. Beyers Naudé gaf de synode een overzicht van het werk, dat zijn instituut doet voor een betere theologische vorming van de voorgangers van de zogenaamde separatistische bantoekerken. Dit zijn kerken, die afgescheiden leven van de officiële kerken en een vrij en zelfstandig bestaan leiden, maar het theologische peil is absoluut onvoldoende. Er zijn in Zuid-Afrika duizenden van zulke kerken en kerkjes; tezamen tellen zij ruim drie miljoen leden, dat is 25 procent van de totale bantoe-bevolking.

Doel van het instituut is om door samenwerking de kloof tussen de rassen in Zuid-Afrika te overbruggen. Van officiële kerkelijke zijde ondervindt het instituut echter geen enkele erkenning, omdat het zich kritisch opstelt t.o.v. de apartheidspolitiek. Daarom is ds. Beyers Naudé aangewezen op buitenlandse hulp. Ds. Beyers Naudé vroeg de gereformeerde synode er, waar zij dat kan, aan mee te werken, dat in de Zuid-Afrikaanse kerken meer begrip voor zijn arbeid ontstaat. Zijn ideaal is, dat het instituut eens opgeheven kan worden, omdat de kerken het werk voor de afgescheiden bantoekerken ter hand nemen.

Volgens ds. Beyers Naudé is er met name onder de jonge bantoes in de grote steden een toenemende onrust te bespeuren. De invloed van de black-power beweging neemt toe en bij velen groeit een zo grote haat tegen de apartheidspolitiek, dat zij een totale afscheiding van de blanken propageren. Anderzijds zijn er ook nog grote groepen bantoes, die blijven hopen op erkenning en een volwaardige plaats in de samenleving langs vreedzame weg. Met hen zoekt het christelijke instituut samenwerking.

PATRICIA YOUNG SAYS . . .

Today's young bride who waltzes down the aisle believing herself to be very "mod" might be surprised at the origin and intent of the customs she perpetuates. For instance, the custom of having a "best man" and "bridesmaids" dates back to the dawn of civilization when men first had to capture or steal their brides from another tribe. Seems that warriers always took along the "best man" in the tribe to help carry out the raid. The brides girl friends (bridesmaids) put up a real (or pretended) effort to prevent the capture .

When it become obvious that the young women weren't exactly co-operating, parents conceded to the obvious and inevitable and instead, began demanding a price for their daughters — in livestock, ivory, seed or whatever happened to be of value. Out of this system evolved the term of "giving the bride away" when parents wanted to unload an ugly duckling.

The amount paid for a bride in England, became known as the "wed" from which we get the word wedding. The elopement came about when a young man was unable to pay a "wed" to his brides parents. Don't look now, but that wedding ring is said to have developed from the custom of putting fetters on the wrists of captured Egyptian slave women. Most antiquarians claim that the honeymoon evolved out of the custom of newly married couples spending the first thirty days of their married life in hiding drinking mead — a special wine made from honey.

The throwing of rice (later symbolized by coloured confetti) at a newly married couple, originated in Persia as a symbol of hope that the marriage would be fruitful. Similarly, the young flowergirls carried garlands of wheat as hope that the union would produce many children.

As for the confused male who suddenly finds himself caught up in this ritual of ancient customs, he just doesn't have a chance. Even the word "groom" dates back to ancient England where the groom was the lowliest of servants in charge of the horses. It was at that time that newly married men took to waiting on table at their own wedding feasts as an indication to one and all that they intended to be the devoted and lowly servant of the bride!

Well, times have changed, it seems — though not the words. Or have they?

Church Announcements

CHR. REF. CHURCH

Called

by Strathroy, East, Rev. P. Sluys of Rocky Mountain House, Alta.

Sincere congratulations to
the Reverend and Mrs.
JAC. GEUZEBROEK

on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Reverend Geuzebroek's Investiture into the Ministry on November 26, 1969.

We hope and pray that our beloved Pastor and his Wife will be allowed to work in God's Kingdom for a long time to come.

A reception in their honour will be held on Saturday evening, November 22, 1969, in the auditorium of the Grace Christian Reformed Church of Scarborough, from 8:15 till 10:00 o'clock.

Everyone wishing to congratulate Rev. and Mrs. Geuzebroek personally, is cordially invited.

Directions: Our church is located just North of highway 401, next to Channel 9 TV station at 1580 McCowan Road. McCowan Road is 1 block West of highway intersection # 60.

The Consistory and Congregation of the Grace Christian Reformed Church of Scarborough, Ont.

DATA CENTRE

November 19	Dedication of the renewed First Chr. Ref. Church of Chatham, Ont. (17 Tweedsmuir Ave.) Participants among others: Revs. G. Vander Ziel, J. Verbrugge, and L. Mulder. 8 p.m.
November 19	Film "De Stem van het Water", St. Catharines, Ont.
November 20	Afternoon and evening, Open House renewed First Chr. Ref. Church, 17 Tweedsmuir Ave., Chatham, Ont.
November 21	Film "De Stem van het Water", Owen Sound, Ont.
November 22	Willing Workers' Bazaar for Calvin Chr. School, West 5th St., Hamilton, Ont. 11.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Lunch is served.
November 22	Film "De Stem van het Water", Peterborough, Ont.
November 22	Bazaar Timothy Chr. School, 28 Elmhurst Dr., Rexdale, Ont.
November 27	Film "De Stem van het Water", St. Thomas, Ont.
November 28	Hamilton District Chr. High School. Annual Commencement, in the Auditorium. 8 p.m.
November 28	A.A.C.S. Lecture by Dr. P. A. Schouls on "Understanding our Times", Calvin Christian Senior High School, Edmonton, Alta.
December 12	A.A.C.S. Lecture by Dr. P. A. Schouls on "Understanding our Times", Calvin Christian Senior High School, Edmonton, Alta.

★ ★

DISCOVERY I

The second meeting of team "B" will be held at 8:00 p.m. in the following communities (speaker Dr. P. G. Schrotenboer on "Family Living and Learning in Biblical Perspective"):

November 24	Christian Reformed Church, Main Street, Drayton.
November 25	Port Arthur/Fort William (see local bulletin for location).
November 26	Winnipeg (see local bulletin for location).
November 27	Christian Reformed Church, 1807 - 2nd Avenue N., Lethbridge.
November 28	Calgary (see local bulletin for location).
December 2	Christian Reformed Church, 661 Agnes Street, Victoria.
December 1	Bellevue Christian School, Seattle, Washington.



From the Mail box

•

The alarming second worship service

With great interest I am following the discussion in Calvinist-Contact (and other Ref. Magazines) with regard to our second worship service.

On the surface it seems that the main problem is not so much the morning service but rather the afternoon- or evening service. Many difficulties are connected with this problem. I am convinced if we do not act now our second service could wane away in one or two decades. We already face a crisis of survival.

Now, I am fully aware of the fact, that some of my following suggestions do, to the very letter, not meet with art. 47-A and art. 52-A+B of the Chr. Ref. church-order and may be subject to an approval of Synod. Some of these ideas may be acceptable and brought into practice without approbation.

We may not rely any longer on our major church assemblies or on the pulpit in this matter; no minister by himself is able to stop the downward trend. Only our total efforts and combined forces, in the Name of the Head of our church, may reverse this trend and bring relief.

The Synodical Liturgy Committee as well as critics (professors, doctors, ministers, adult and young members of our denomination), are convinced that there is an amazing lack of Spirit, response and communication in our churches. The services are too much (and forgive me the quotation of one of our ministers in Calvinist-Contact) "a one-man-show".

The Synodical Committee suggests for the first service more speaking- and confession-in-unison. I am afraid this won't solve our problems, especially not for our Canadian churches, founded mostly 15 to 20 years ago, with members who have a strong historic religious background and a way of life with deeprooted customs. We can respect the tremendous adjustments they have made in those years. Also we have to admire their efforts to keep alive some of their dearest customs and convictions.

The Synodical Committees did a splendid work, especially in revealing the history of our church in this matter. Nevertheless we should, maybe with a few exceptions, in detail, maintain the present and mostly adopted worship order for the morning service. The second service is an entirely different matter.

I am thankful that we still have leadership in our church. Ministers and others, who in spite of defiance and resistance, which could be anticipated, are not afraid to upset "The comfortable Pew" in our church, if they deem it necessary for the furtherance of God's Kingdom. Of all the recent writers, I sympathise the most with the statements made by the editor of Calvinist-Contact of Sept. 4th and by the article of Reverend H. Numan, in C.C. of Sept. 25th, even when one of his opponents has objections against some expressions of Reverend Numan; expressions, which I rather forgive him. Too many people are trying hard to find a diagnosis, and after this are neglecting to give a corresponding prescription. Others are convinced that we in our church are dealing with a malignant disease and are applying aspirin. Too many are scared or too much preoccupied to go beyond this and rather keep the peace. If we are really concerned with the newly developing structure in our church and society, with the decline in our second worship service, with the fact that 9,000 members in recent years were lost for the Chr. Ref. Church, we would listen with open hearts and minds to all the voices of renewal, especially when we are not ready yet to offer any substitute.

It is a fact that a growing number of young people in our church is critical toward all church matters; this too should cause more concern and anxiety. The "gap" between them and our church, minister, consistory and parents is widening. There is a changing mood; contrary winds are blowing. The basement of our churches is not so much the centre of our youth activities any more. Does not all this reveal the sickness in our present church affairs? Are we justified in blaming our young people for the devaluation of our Spiritual values? No we are not. The second worship service may prove this. In many cases the trouble around our young people is an extension of the environment at home, the institutions of learning, our total society, place of work and . . . our present worship services. We should do a lot of listening to their grievances. They indeed might have many good ideas. One thing is certain, they should become much more involved in our worshipping as many more of our adults should. Thereby we must take a stand between doubtful liberalism and doubtful traditionalism in our church of today. Both elements are present. Too often we are inclined to think about the tumbling down of the Reformed Church in "The Old Country", and behave like an ostrich, when our own difficulties express themselves. In spite of all the church problems, growing numbers of our Reformed people there are determined to reform the present state of church affairs and customs and often with a blessed outcome. Especially the youth is coming back to church again, may it be in a different climate, and this is achieved through the action of "Involvement". Certainly this it not a general picture yet, but rather a breakthrough, and for us there is merit in this experience. A conservative consistory may be good as far as the preaching of the Gospel is concerned but a principal conservatism in our days results more likely in a negative approach toward a Church, shaking on its foundations.

One of the writers in C.C. is thinking in terms of "The bible does not give us much on the form of the Worship services". Maybe he is right, but still in the Bible are hidden all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge and in this Light we may see and understand better the depression, which we have to face and to cope with almost daily in our church life. In the biblical congregations there were also two worship services; one proclamation service in the morning and a prayer service in the afternoon. Another writer in C.C. of Sept. 4th wants to keep "The Preaching of The Living Word in the centre of our Service". I think we all do or should do, but may we not also regard the congregational prayer as the centre of our worship? The direct communication with our Father in Heaven, even through a guided prayer?

I was disapponted that one of the participants did focus our attention on this part of our services. Is this subject too delicate for discussion? Could it be that our worship prayers are due for some reviewing? And is The Lord's Prayer not on the way out in many of our churches? Why? Only in a few of our churches special prayer services are held for our sick and seriously ill people, young or old. Are we in our service not too much guided by the medical profession and therefore not so much counting anymore on the wondrous works of grace and the healing power of our Gracious Lord? Are we still praying for "the uncurable patients"; yes, we do probably, but remember, "Het krachtige gebed van een gelovige vermag veel". Thus there could be special prayer services too, and then not only for the sick but also for the special needs of our world, church, and congregations. Is it not possible that a more flexible second worship order would dedicate more time to all this?

I repeat that the congregation should take a greater part in our worship services. Everyone received certain gifts for the works of christian services: the inspiring power of the Holy Spirit is poured out not only over the ordained ministers, although many members take this for granted. For others the communion of saints is the summit of their spiritual life. There they want to give and to receive. Is it not true, that the more we share our gifts and spiritual possessions with others, the more we have and receive for ourself? Does this not count for our worship services? Some of the readers of C.C. will still ask the question "Would a change in our second worship order solve the apostasy, the crisis in our churches?" I am aware of this and regard the present efforts in C.C. only as a first step. Besides the worship services, there is much more waiting for congregational involvement and action. There is a noticeable decrease in respect, love and affection toward our ministers and officebearers. One of the reasons could be the changing structure in church and society and the ever mounting problems for the ministry and officebearers, in short the factor of "time", (our minister for instance delivers three sermons practically every Sunday). Especially in the promition of spiritual values of the community of Saints and the visiting of the sick and lonely at home and in the hospitals the minster and consistory should share their duties with members (also the female members) of the congregation. This could be organized and be proven very practical. The consistory should more than ever leave all the business matters to committees of administration. We need committees for evangelism, and many are very active, but are we in a sufficient way engaged in the Heed of our own flock or are we just there, inadequate in our performance? Do we listen to the crying voices of our younger members under "Covenant Bonds" in the many secular institutions of higher learning, spread all over this continent? Oh yes, there are many more steps to be taken and all these deserve our fullest attention. Who will share his knowledge and experience in these fields with the readers of this Magazine?

And now back to our present subject. I would ask the consistories of our churches to consider the following Proposal for Liturgy for our second worship services:

1 — Before this Worship starts, as usual introductory singing of the Congregation. After this the chanter (voorzinger) announce a moment of silent prayer, (the consistory have their prayer also before the service in the consistory room).

2 — During the silent prayer, the organist plays very softly a part of the melody of the Hymn of Praise, announced on the blackboard. During a short intermission the minister and the consistory arrive and remain standing; at this moment the congregation rises and without any announcement the organist plays and the communion sings the Hymn of Praise.

3 — Invocation and Greeting: (Our Help . . . and Grace and Mercy . . .) by the Minister.

4 — An elder (by turns) or if this is more meaningful any member of the congregation, welcomes the visitors, the newcomers by name and makes the necessary announcements including the Hymn to be sung after the confession of faith. He reads one of our adopted Creeds (or the Law) and the Assurance of Grace, or Pardon. After singing he is seated and we will have:

5 — The congregational prayer by the minister. (See explanation before.)

6 — Announcement and dedications of the offertory by one of our deacons (by turns). He announces the Hymn to be sung after the collection. The collection itself is performed by collectors, preferably young people. The same deacon will, in front of the pulpit, give thanks to God and will present Him the offering.

7 — Singing announced.

8 — An elder, eventually a deacon or a member of the congregation (see under 4) will announce the part of the Scripture and the text for the Sermon and will read the same. He also will announce the Hymn to be sung in response to the Sermon.

9 — Sermon. (Minister)

10 — Singing announced.

11 — Post-Sermon Prayer or The Lord's Prayer by a member of the congregation. By the same, announcement of the closing Hymn and the Doxology to be sung after the Benediction.

12 — The Benediction. (Minister)

13 — Doxology.

After the service, open discussion of the Sermon and, if possible, coffee served by young ladies of the congregation. Occasionally a children's- or boys' choir could be scheduled.

G. Diemer.

"The Burden of Loneliness"

This is the title of a brochure published by the Christian Marriage Contact Bureau, and is free for the asking. Write to C.M.C.B., Box 154, Station R, Toronto 17, Ontario.

The C.M.C.B. is not a business enterprise — it wishes to be a service organization only. It was established by a small number of Christian Reformed people who felt that they should do something to express the compassion of Christ to those who have not found or who have lost their partner.

Among the boardmembers and advisors of this organization are psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, lawyers and ministers; and all those connected with the C.M.C.B. have committed themselves to the strictest secrecy.

The Next Issues of Calvinist-Contact

will be DATED	will be MAILED	Closing time for ADVERTISEMENTS
November 27	November 21	November 19 noon
December 4	November 28	November 26 noon
December 11	December 5	December 3 noon
December 18	Christmas Issue	December 10
December 26/31	New Year's Issue	December 17



VAN ANDERE DRUKPERSEN

Tijdschriften - dokumentatie

Laten we nu eens ophouden.

Dit artikel is een waagstuk, wanneer ik het pleit ga voeren om eens op te houden met het eindeloos schrijven en praten over het schriftgezag, Genesis 1-3, schepping en evolutie, alsof er geen belangrijker vragen in deze tijd zijn. Telkens komen er bepaalde vraagstukken aan de orde, die na verloop van tijd uit de belangstelling verdwijnen. Ook de problemen waar onze kerken door beroerd worden, zullen weer hun brandende actualiteit verliezen.

Dat is in de loop der geschiedenis herhaaldelijk gebeurd. Er zijn theologische vraagstukken geweest, waarvan men meende, dat daarmede alles gemoeid was, terwijl niemand zich heden ten dage daarover druk maakt.

De strijd over infra- en supralapsarisme is uiteindelijk in vrede ontslapen, toen de Generale Synode in 1905 er aan herinnerde dat ook de Synode van Dordt van 1618-'19 geen uitspraak in deze kwestie deed, en de waarschuwing eraan toevoegde: "om dergelijke diepgaande leerstukken, die het verstand der eenvoudigen verre te boven gaan, zo weinig mogelijk op de kansel te brengen, en in de prediking des Woords en het catechetisch onderwijs zich te houden aan de voorstelling die onze belijdenisschriften geven". Maar hoe verbeten was menigmaal de strijd. Men meende heus, dat het Evangelie zelf in geding was.

Wij hebben nog de heftige discussies in ons hoofd over verbond en doop, over ambt en algemene en bijzondere genade. Op het ogenblik kijkt men er vreemd tegen aan. Als men nu het woord verbond gebruikt denkt men aan Gods trouw en de heilsgeschiedenis die Hij met ons maakt, en niet aan een sluitende Verbondstheologie.

Prof. Grosheide heeft menigmaal in "Belijden en Beleven" gewezen op het gevaar dat wij, gereformeerde mensen, veel te weinig centraal, vanuit het hart van het Evangelie leven.

Het zal wel onze min of meer intellectualistische inslag zijn, dat wij veel gauwer warm lopen voor theologische vraagstukken en verontrust zijn over een afwijking hier en een afwijking daar dan over het gebrek aan evangelische kracht om de levensproblemen in klein en groot verband aan te kunnen. Het gaat ons beter af te spreken over het verband dan te leven uit het verbond, te spreken over het gebed dan het beoefenen van het gebed, het debatteren over het gezag van de Schrift dan daadwerkelijk te buigen voor het gezag van de Schrift in het gewone leven van alle dag.

Een lezer schreef mij: "Hoe komt het dat het rapport over de stand van het geestelijk leven veel minder pennen in beweging gebracht heeft, dan de vraagstukken, die vandaag aan de orde zijn. Was dat rapport niet belangrijk? Is het niet om verontrust te zijn, wanneer zo weinig zekerheid en blijdschap van het geloof geconstateerd moest worden? Zo weinig schuldbesef? Zo weinig toekomstverwachting?"

Onze lezer acht deze vragen belangrijker dan vele problemen, waarover wij niet voldoende licht hebben, terwijl Gods Woord heel duidelijk is ten aanzien van de heilsboodschap en de inhoud van het discipelschap. En nu wordt de aandacht zo verplaatst van die duidelijke dingen aangaande het Koninkrijk Gods en zijn gerechtigheid naar de onduidelijke dingen. Daar komt nog iets bij, waarover wij wel zeer verontrust moeten zijn, n.l. dat de Kerk de kracht en de wijsheid van de Heilige Geest schijnt te missen om één duidelijk profetisch woord te spreken ten aanzien van het oorlogsvraagstuk, het rassenprobleem en het mondiale sociale vraagstuk.

Ook ik weet het, zwijgt stil.

Wanneer ik nu een lans breek om in de prediking en de catechese heel duidelijk en concreet het Evangelie te verkondigen en niet de mensen te vermoeien met allerlei theologische vragen, die (nog) niet tot helderheid gekomen zijn, dan weet ik, dat hiertegen van twee kanten heel wat in te brengen is. Met Elisa zeg ik: "Ook ik weet het, zwijgt stil". Ook ik weet, dat men het theologisch bedrijf niet met één machtswoord kan stilleggen. Ook ik weet, dat men de theologische vraagstukken niet uit de weg mag gaan of onder de tafel kan werken. Ze worden ons opgedrongen.

Ook ik weet, dat theologen willen zeggen: We kunnen toch onze ogen niet sluiten voor de vraagstukken, die nu aan de orde zijn? En we mogen onze studenten toch niet met enkele stichtelijkheden of algemene theologische machtsspreuken de rimboe insturen?

Ook ik weet, dat het fundamentalisme intellectuelen het ongeloof kan injagen.

Een van de andere kant hoor ik, dat de vragen over het schriftgezag, schepping en evolutie vergaande consequenties kunnen hebben voor het verstaan van het centrale van het Evangelie.

Ook ik weet, dat theologie en Woordverkondiging, theologie en geestelijk leven heel veel met elkaar te maken hebben. Ook ik weet, dat de geschiedenis een wisselwerking laat zien tussen verschraling van het geestelijk leven en theologische dwalingen. Ook ik weet het, zwijgt stil.

Ja, en toch ben ik overtuigd, dat de Kerk het meest gebouwd wordt door de aandacht te vestigen op het positieve Evangelie, dat zo onvoorstelbaar en onuitputtelijk rijk is, dat men een leven lang nodig heeft om daarvan iets uit te stallen.

Per slot van rekening krijgt een mens stenen voor brood, wanneer de theologische vragen veel meer aandacht vragen dan de oude en nieuwe schatten van het Koninkrijk Gods. In zeker opzicht is theologisch experimenteren een luxe vergeleken bij de dodelijke ernst van het Evangelie dat ons telkens weer voor levensbeslissingen stelt. Zowel de ernst als de troost van het Evangelie ligt nooit op het vlak van de vrijblijvende discussie, maar op het niveau van concrete bekering en waarachtig geloof, d.w.z. van de aanvaarding van alle consequenties van het Evangelie der verzoening.

Dezer dagen las ik ergens van dr. Cramer, die indertijd in de Hervormde gemeente van Den Haag een groot en dankbaar gehoor had, omdat hij het Woord Gods bediende. Hij gaf brood des levens. Op een kwade zondag begon hij een serie preken, waarin hij theologiseerde over het Woord Gods. Hij fulmineerde tegen de fundamentalistische opvatting van Gods Woord en de mechanische inspiratie. Hij erkende het recht van de historische kritiek. Van een onfeilbare en letterlijk geïnspireerde Bijbel moest hij niets weten. Cramer gaf een stukje theologie inplaats van de levende verkondiging van het Evangelie. Gevolg: algemene verontwaardiging en verontrusting, het opzeggen van het vertrouwen in de prediking van dr. Cramer, het leeglopen der kerken, als hij preekte. Cramer is ervan geschrokken. Hij wilde het weer goedmaken. En met verheffing van stem, slaande met de vuist op de Bijbel, riep hij uit: dit is en blijft het betrouwbare Woord van God. En dat meende Cramer natuurlijk, maar het was psychologisch, pastoraal en uit het oogpunt van de verkondiging volkomen verkeerd geweest.

Immers, toen hij het brood des levens uitdeelde uit het Woord Gods en toen hij getuigde van de betrouwbare Bijbel, sprak hij in het geloof als dienaar des Woords, en toen hij een inspiratietheorie ging preken, sprak hij als theoloog over het Woord en bediende een stukje theologie.

Perverse theologie.

Het woord pervers wordt vooral toegepast op het gebied van de sexualiteit. Het duidt aan een sexualiteit, die doorgeslagen en omgeslagen is, en daardoor ontaard en bedorven. Het heeft ook te maken met een over alle grenzen heentrekken van de sexualiteit. Een pansexualisme, waar onze moderne tijd zo gruwelijk vol van is. Alsof de mens een uitsluitend en overheersend sexueel wezen is. Alsof er geen grenzen gesteld mogen worden. De sexualiteit is overtrokken, over-dreven. Wij zeggen tegen elkaar overal waar "te" voor staat is niet goed behalve tevreden. Te-sexueel wordt een macht over enkeling en gemeenschap. Dat is pervers.

Nu is het leven vol van die verabsoluteringen van op zichzelf goede dingen. Het is telkens pervers door de overtrokkenheid. Voorbeelden? De materie is Gods gave, maar te veel opgaan in de materie is materialisme. Het verstand is Gods gave, maar te veel macht en autoriteit toekennen aan het verstand is intellectualisme en rationalisme.

Sport is weldaad, maar "te" is maniakaal en afgodendienst.

Je kunt van de sport of welke hobby bezeten zijn, d.w.z. door die macht bezet, zodat je een slaaf bent. Allerlei andere waarden worden verdrongen tot de levende God toe.

Zo is het gesteld met zaken doen, economie, sociale en individuele waarden, met de kunst en de wetenschap, met vaderland, kerk, confessie en dogma. Waar "te" voor komt, wordt de op zichzelf goede zaak pervers, ontaard, demonisch. Dan spreken wij van economisme, communisme, liberalisme, estheticisme, rationalisme, nationalisme, kerkisme, confessionalisme en dogmatisme. U kunt er nog heel wat aan toevoegen als verbondsmethodisme, mysticisme enz. Allemaal ziekelijk en soms doodziek.

Maar aan dit gevaar ontkomt ook niet de theologie, het achteraf nadenken over Gods Woord, het op een theologische formule zetten van allerlei aspecten van het Evangelie. Dit alles kan zulk een heersende — in plaats van dienende — plaats gaan innemen, dat het pervers, overtrokken, ja een macht over het Woord van God wordt.

Toen kardinaal Alfrink op de laatste concilie-zitting zei, dat de transsubstantiatie slechts een gebrekkige poging was om de werkelijke tegenwoordigheid van Christus in het H. Avondmaal op een

(Vervolg op pag. 5)

ONS FEUILLETON

WIJDER DAN DE WERELD

door S. P. Akkerman

HOOFDSTUK 13

Bij huis wordt hij al opgewacht door Jetse. De zelfverzekerde Jetse is uit zijn gewone doen. Een beetje zenuwachtig. Het is ook maar niks zo maar een plaats huren en dan . . . trouwen met Akke . . .

"Morgen naar de Oudedijk?" vraagt hij, als zijn vader van de fiets stapt.

"Dat zit nog. Die zaak heeft haken en ogen . . . Kom mee in huis."

Daar krijgt hij en de vrouw het verhaal in geuren en kleuren. Als Blomhuis is uitgesproken, doet zijn vrouw er het zwijgen toe.

Maar dat is Sikke's bedoeling helemaal niet. Hij wil dat ze hem gelijk zal geven, hem prijzen om zijn kordaat optreden. En nu zegt ze niets.

"Heb ik dat niet mooi getrakteerd?" vraagt hij, en kijkt hem aan met glunderende ogen.

Vrouw Blomhuis kijkt hem een beetje spottend aan. "Daar moet je nu weer Sikke Blomhuis voor heten om daar direct naar toe te stomen, en dadelijk vast te stellen: zo en anders niet. Als je zoon trouwt is dat toch geen kleinigheid?"

"Een kleinigheid! Meen je dan dat ik er een grapje van maak? Nou nog mooier!"

"Lijkt er wel wat op," zegt ze . . . "Toen Jetse het jou had verteld, had je het eerst wel eens even aan kunnen zien . . ."

Maar dit neemt Blomhuis niet. Zelfs niet van zijn vrouw . . .

"Gekheid allemaal, als je Harm Dolius de braam niet op de neus zet, is er niets met de man te beginnen. Dan neemt hij je in de boot, waar je levend bij zit."

De stoere Jetse zit er maar wat verloren bij . . . "En wat is er dan nu besloten?" vraagt hij.

"Besloten? Dolius zei: dan trouwen ze maar niet. Om wat geld laat die het overgaan . . ."

Jetse zit nog even zwijgend. Dan staat hij op. Stil glipt hij de kamer uit. Zijn moeder ziet hem verdwijnen. Nu zou ze kunnen schreien.

"Hoe moet dat nu, Sikke?"

"Ja, weet ik dat. Ik heb de zaak toch zeker niet in de hobbel geschopt?"

"Nee, dat niet . . . maar misschien niet zo verstandig aangepakt . . ."

"O nee? Ik had mij in de luren moeten laten leggen door die Harm, zeker! Zijn achterbakse streken moeten nemen, he? Huis inrichten, och, och . . . voor een appel en een ei er wat meubeltjes in laten zetten . . ."

"Dat zeg ik toch niet."

"Ja, dat zeg je wel."

Dan verlaat Sikke Blomhuis de kamer om in de schuur heen en weer te lopen en zijn kalmte te herwinnen . . .

Harm Dolius zit in de voorkamer. Hij zit daar maar wat beteuterd te kijken. Dat Blomhuis hier direct op af zou komen, en zo hals over kop zou vertrekken, is wat buiten zijn program omgegaan. Hij had gedacht, dat Jetse de zaak wel zou overbrengen, en dat Blomhuis het wel zou nemen . . . Maar dat is mis gelopen. Harm is aan de gierige kant. Jongens, jongens, een duizend of wat zo maar aan je dochter lenen of geven of hoe dan ook. Het is en blijft een lastig ding. Dat geld staat zo zeker op de bank. En er komt ieder jaar rente bij. Een mooi ding . . En nu dit . . . .

En hij zit ermee. Want de buitenwacht mag dan menen, dat zijn vrouw niet veel heeft in te brengen. Ja, ja, zo doet ze zich voor als er een ander bij is. Maar hij weet wel beter. Straks moet hij voor de balie. En als Akke dan ook mee begint. Hij wilde wel dat hij hier in de voorkamer wat kon blijven zitten. En een pijp roken. Maar dat zal hem niet glad zitten.

Hij schrikt er van op als hij de stem van zijn vrouw in de gang hoort: "Kom je brood eten, Harm?"

Ja, ja, brood eten . . . en opbiechten. Een mens kan wat beleven . . .

"Ja, ik kom al," roept hij terug, en met een zucht staat hij op uit zijn stoel.

In de achterkamer is de tafel gedekt. Zijn vrouw en Akke zitten al aan tafel. De jongen is nog niet van school terug. Die is in de regel laat.

Dolius bidt stil. En dan eten ze. Hij wilde nu wel dat ze maar niets vroegen, maar Akke heeft een rode kleur, en zijn vrouw zit met felle ogen. Daar heb je het al . . .

"Waarom vertrok Blomhuis zo op stel en sprong? Jullie zouden toch over het huren van die plaats praten, is het niet?"

Harm knikt . . . "Ja, ja, maar wij kregen enig verschil, en toen is hij weggelopen."

Rood in haar knappe gezicht kijkt Akke haar vader aan. Zij en Jetse hebben al zo vaak over trouwen gesproken . . .

"Wat voor verschil, als ik het weten mag?" vraagt de vrouw.

En nu staat Harm Dolius wel onder een druk van tachtig atmosferen. Nu moet hij wel voor de draad komen met zijn voorstellen, want dat hij gierig is, wil hij voor vrouw en dochter eigenlijk niet weten . . . .

"Nou ik stelde voor: ik de meubels en de trekker en de Lely hark, en dan Blomhuis de koeien . . ."

Als met stomheid geslagen zitten de vrouwen met vuurrode gezichten . . . De vrouw is over haar toeren. Harm had wel eens vaker van die vreemde streken. Maar dit komt haar eer te na. En is dit gemarchandeer christelijk? Akke schaamt zich helemaal een aap. Wat zullen ze er bij Blomhuis wel van denken?

"En meen je nu, dat wij dat goed zouden vinden?" valt de vrouw uit. "Als onze enige dochter trouwt, dan zal ze royaal trouwen. Dat kunnen wij toch zeker betalen, he? Akke zoekt de meubels en alles wat daarbij hoort wel met mij uit. Over trekkers heb ik geen oordeel. Twintig koeien moeten er komen? Jullie, jij en Blomhuis tellen de zaak maar op en dan elk de helft."

"Ik molk vijftien jaar bij u op de boerderij," zegt Akke, "en wat kreeg ik daarvoor . . . Nee vadertje, nu moet je over de brug komen."

Harm Dolius eet niet met smaak. Hij gaat dit verliezen, begrijpt hij. Hij knikt maar zo'n beetje. "Wij zullen dan wel eens zien," zegt hij.

"Hoe zien."

Twee ogen kijken hem aan.

"Hoe wij het regelen."

"Wat heb jij tegen Blomhuis gezegd, toen die niet op je gekke voorstellen inging?" vraagt de vrouw.

Even aarzelt Harm Dolius. Dan zegt hij: "Ik zei: dan moet het trouwen maar overgaan . . ."

"Man, man! Je maakt jezelf onmogelijk. Maar zo laat ik onze Akke niet behandelen. Dat vertelt Blomhuis dus thuis. Dan ga jij vanavond nog naar Blomhuis en zegt, dat het niet overgaat, maar dat het doorgaat. En dat jullie morgen naar de Oudedijk gaan om de plaats te bezien."

Zo . . . en een stevige klap op de tafel onderstreept dit bevel.

"Het is al laat," zegt Harm en stopt de pijp. "Morgen maar eens zien."

"Nee, niet morgen, maar direct! Meen je dat ik voor gierig over de tong wil gaan? Zie die stumper van een Akke daar nu eens zitten. Dan gaat het maar over! . . . Ben jij een vader? Harm maakt het in orde, vanavond nog!"

Dolius rijst van zijn stoel: "Toe dan maar," zegt hij met tegenzin, "dan moet het maar." Met de lantaarn in volle glorie fietst hij het erf af.

"Stil nu maar, Akke," zegt haar moeder, "je vader is wel eens meer wat vreemd soms."

En zo waaien op een oktobermorgen met veel blauw in de lucht de vlaggen breed uit op de nok van Dolius' hoge plaats. Jetse, gestoken in een zwarte jas en gestreepte broek, rijdt met zijn ouders naar het huis van zijn aanstaande vrouw. Natuurlijk ben je op zo'n dag wat anders dan gewoon. Akke, in een wolk van witte tule met een sluier over het haar, lijkt een dame uit een sprookje.

In de voorkamer zijn ze even samen.

"En?" vraagt Jetse.

Ze slaat haar armen om zijn hals en zoent hem. Maar dan is het: in de vorm blijven . . . Met Akke aan zijn arm schrijdt Jetse naar de auto. De chauffeur heeft het portier al wijd geopend.

Een rij glimmende wagens rijdt voor. Blomhuis en Dolius met hun vrouwen rijden in een knots van een slee. Blomhuis mag wel voor een dag de heer eens uithangen, maar Dolius moet nog opmerken: "Wat rekenen ze nu per kilometer?"

"Och man, een rijksdaalder voor mijn part," zegt Blomhuis.

In het gemeentehuis houdt een ambtenaar een droge speech. Daar is niet veel aan te beleven. Maar de gecharterde fotograaf is van zessen klaar. Die maakt foto's van het zetten der handtekeningen. Van Blomhuis en Dolius met hun vrouwen, en het bruidspaar natuurlijk wel een stuk of tien.

(Wordt vervolgd)

HOE KERST BEGON

Als we die twee mensen zo in hun huisje hadden zien zitten, hadden wij stellig met hen te doen gehad. Na hun ouderdom te oordelen, was hun leven bijna over. En zij hadden geen kind. Zacharias en Elisabet hadden er vaak genoeg om gebeden, maar zij waren kinderloos gebleven. De pijn van een kinderloos gezin wordt eigenlijk alleen maar gevoeld door degenen, die dat zelf beleven, maar het moet toch wel moeilijk zijn om in de vervulling van je leven te blijven geloven, als je weet dat er niemand na je komt. Als je huwelijk zonder kinderen uitdooft.

Voor mensen in het Oud-Testamentische Israel was het haast nog erger. Iedere rechtgeaarde Israeliet hoopte dat hij direct of indirect betrokken zou zijn bij de komst van de Messias. En dat kon toch alleen maar als er kinderen waren. Waren er geen kinderen, dan was er ook geen mogelijkheid om mee te helpen aan de komst van de Beloofde. Zacharias en Elisabet geloofden wel. O zeker, ze geloofden, maar ze wisten ook dat God hen voor Zijn plan niet gebruiken zou. En dat moet een domper op hun huwelijk en op hun geloof hebben gezet.

Die twee oude mensen hadden een goede reputatie. Niet dat de mensen hen met respect en eerbied bejegenden. Ja, dat ook. Het is wel belangrijk wat de mensen van je zeggen. "Een goede naam is better dan goede olie" zei de Spreukendichter. Maar wat God van je zegt, dat is toch belangrijker. En God zei van deze mensen, dat zij in AL de geboden Gods wandelden, onberispelijk. Dat is wat, als God dit van je zegt.

Als wij nu zo doorgaan, dan lezen en denken wij alleen maar aan Zacharias en Elisabet. En dan lezen we toch eigenlijk verkeerd. Want het gaat er niet om wat voor mensen die Zacharias en Elisabet waren of wat zij deden, maar het gaat er om wat God doet en deed. Let maar eens op die namen: Zacharias betekent Jahweh (dat is de God van het verbond) gedenkt. En Elisabet betekent, mijn God is een eed. Zij hebben zichzelf natuurlijk die namen niet gegeven, maar het is niet zonder Goddelijke leiding geweest dat zij die naam droegen. Als wij op die mensen letten, dan zeggen wij dat "Jahweh gedenkt" en "mijn God is een eed" samen in hun huisje zitten met de overblijfselen van hun huwelijk in hun handen. Dan is het alleen maar troosteloos. Maar als wij de geschiedenis als Gods-openbaring lezen, dan komt er spanning in. Spanning, omdat wij in die namen Gods doen mogen verwachten.

Zacharias moet naar de tempel. Hij moet aan het werk. Of wilt u: hij moet zijn ambt vervullen. En terwijl hij daar is, wordt hij door het lot aangewezen om het Heilige te betreden. Dat was een groot ding in het leven van een priester. Toch gaat het niet om dat belangrijke in Zacharias' leven. Het gaat er om dat juist daar, in de vervulling van zijn ambt, hij bezoek krijgt van een engel. Die engel had ook wel bij hem en zijn vrouw thuis kunnen komen. Maar dat gebeurde niet. Hij komt, als Zacharias bezig is met zijn priesterwerk en als het volk buiten wacht om gezegend te worden.

Wij mogen dit ook wel even anders zeggen. Het gebeurt in de kerk, in de vergadering van de gelovigen, dat God zijn plan ter verlossing inleidt. Precies daar wordt hem verteld, dat zijn gebed is verhoord. Is het te gewaagd om te zeggen, dat het gebed van Zacharias om kinderen een onderdeel was van het verlossingsplan van God? Is het te gewaagd om te zeggen, dat mijn gebeden een onderdeel zijn van het verlossingsplan van God? Misschien moet ik wel lang wachten, misschien lijkt het er op, dat mijn gebed (waarvoor dan ook) terugkaatst en niet gehoord wordt. Maar het kan ook zijn, dat ik het niet zie tegen de achtergrond van wat God doet. Dat misschien mijn gebed wel omgevormd of pasklaar gemaakt moet worden voor dat plan.

Hoe ook, Zacharias heeft daar wel een beetje moeite mee gehad. Toen de engel zei, dat hij een zoon zou krijgen, heeft hij misschien wel eerst aan zijn vrouw gedacht en toen aan God. Of misschien wel helemaal niet aan God. Precies zoals ik zelf ook vaak denk aan mijn eigen verlangens en vooruitzichten, wanneer het over mijn gebeden gaat. In hoeverre wil ik ze zelf ingevoegd zien in het plan van God? Dat kon Zacharias niet zo gauw verwerken. Zoiets onmogelijk in zijn leven? En zo kan ik ook de dingen vaak niet verwerken. Mijn gebeden een onderdeel van Gods plan?

Hij is met stomheid geslagen. Figuurlijk en letterlijk. Waarom? Omdat hij het niet in elkaar passen kon. Omdat hij maar niet kon begrijpen, hoe zijn oude en verdorde leven zou kunnen dienen in het wereld-verlossingsplan van God. En wie zal er Zacharias hard om vallen? Kan ik het? Kan ik het zien hoe God mijn leven en mijn verlangens invoegen zal in Zijn wereldomvattend plan van verlossing? Zacharias kon niet meer praten, totdat hij zou zien dat het werkelijkheid was. Hij kon niet meer praten. Hij kon alleen maar denken. Maar als dan eindelijk dat jongetje er is, dan breekt hij uit in een lofzang: "Geloofd zij de Here, de God van Israel (dat is de God van het verbond, de God wiens naam hij draagt), gelooft zij de Here!"

Zo werd Kerst ingeleid met een antwoord op een gebed. Een gebed, dat afgeschreven en verstomd was. Dat wil zeggen: afgeschreven en verstomd in het huis vau Zacharias en Elisabet, maar niet in de hemel. Hoeveel van onze gebeden hebben wij afgeschreven, terwijl zij genoteerd staan in de hemel? "Merk op mijn ziel, wat antwoord God u geeft."

D.F.

★

★ ★

REDEN FOR DANK

Er is een hoopvol teken voor degenen in Ontario, die een eigen christelijke school onderhouden. Zoals bekend werkt men reeds verscheidene jaren in deze provincie aan iets wat men in Alberta nu reeds enige tijd heeft, namelijk aan overheidssteun voor de scholen. Om het meer precies te zeggen: men wil een einde gemaakt zien aan het betalen van dubbele belasting. Enerzijds moeten de ouders meebetalen in de public school belasting en anderzijds moet men geheel uit eigen middelen de christelijke school bekostigen.

Nu is er wel eens meer een hoopvol teken geweest, maar verder dan een teken was het eigenlijk nimmer gekomen. En in feite is er ook nu nog iets meer te zeggen. Maar het heeft er alle schijn van, dat de contouren zich gaan aftekenen.

Nu heeft Ontario een Progressive Conservative regering. Dat wil zeggen, dat de Progressive Conservatives reeds jaren de regeringspartij zijn. Als politieke partij hebben ook de Progressive Conservatives hun zogenaamde "caucus" samenkomsten, waarin het beleid van de partij en in casu dus van de regering wordt besproken en vastgesteld. Deze bijeenkomsten zijn een particuliere aangelegenheid en gesloten voor buitenstaanders.

Het was op zichzelf reeds opvallend dat vertegenwoordigers van de Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools werden toegelaten tot deze caucus-meeting. Men zou dit een onderscheiding kunnen noemen, die nog niet aan een ander of andere groep is te beurt gevallen. Daarin zou men reeds een welwillendheid kunnen bespeuren.

Maar er was meer. Mr. J. A. Olthuis, die de leiding heeft bij dit contact met de regering, schreef reeds "the response, which we had was very encouraging." Maar enkele dagen daarna lazen wij wat een der leden van de Progressive Conservative Party (die tevens lid van de Legislature is) over deze samenkomst geschreven had.

Na op het unieke gewezen te hebben, dat buitenstaanders worden toegelaten tot een "caucus meeting", zegt de briefschrijver dat hij er van overtuigd is, dat de Heilige Geest in die vergadering werkte en de besprekingen beinvloedde. Nadat de mensen van de Ontario Alliance hun lange presentatie gegeven hadden, hebben blijkbaar zeer vele van de aanwezigen hun instemming betuigd met de principes van de Christelijke school. Daar zijn waarschijnlijk wel redenen voor aan te wijzen, zoals het stukbreken van het gezinsleven, het toenemend gebruik van verdovende middelen en de nieuwe moraliteit. Maar niettemin was het een verheugend verschijnsel dat velen in die caucus meeting hun bezorgdheid uitspraken over de richting die het openbaar onderwijs neemt en die openlijk bekenden, dat zij van het christelijk onderwijs veel verwachten. De hoop is zeker niet zonder grond, dat deze overwegingen zullen leiden tot een daadwerkelijke hulp, die van de regering kan komen.

Als wij wel eens mogen twijfelen of het gebed voor de overheid in onze godsdienstoefening enige zin heeft, dan ligt hier wel het bewijs. Als wij dit dan ook maar zo zien. Als wij er dan maar voor oppassen, dat ons pogen niet is gericht op het besparen van enige dollars, maar dat ons doel is, dat ons volk oog mag krijgen voor het feit, dat wij ook in de scholen godsdienst bedrijven. Dat het ons er om gaat, dat wij onze kinderen naar God leiden en dat deswege discriminatie teneinde moet komen.

Hier sprak iemand, die het bedrijf van de provinciale regering van zeer nabij meemaakt en als vertegenwoordiger daarop invloed kan uitoefenen. Wanneer zo iemand het werk van Gods Geest bespeurt en "earnestly believes" dat provinciale erkenning komende is, dan is er van onze zijde meer dan voldoende reden voor dankbaarheid.

D.F.

Laten we nu eens ophouden

(Vervolg van pag. 4)

theologische formule te zetten, en toen hij zeide, dat hij geen enkele moeite had om die formulering te laten vallen, indien men maar vasthield aan de presentia realis (de werkelijke tegenwoordigheid van Christus), toen dacht ik twee dingen. Allereerst, dit bedoelde Luther en Calvijn nu ook altijd. En vervolgens: wat een schuld en wat een tragiek wanneer de theologie pervers wordt n.l. wanneer de formulering belangrijker wordt dan de zaak waar het argeloos en onbezonnen in het Evangelie om gaat. Moesten nu voor deze perverse theologie de foltertuigen de christenen radbraken en de brandstapels roken?

En het Protestantisme kent ook zijn inquisitie vanuit een perverse theologie, d.w.z. vanuit de overschatting van de theologische bezinning en formulering achteraf. In zeker opzicht is theologiseren een speelse luxe. Men moet het weten te relativeren als een dienst aan de verkondiging en niet een heersen over de verkondiging. Nu is luxe een aangename zaak, wanneer het met het noodzakelijke levensonderhoud in orde is. Er zijn mensen, die altijd in de schuld zitten, omdat ze eerst met de luxe-uitgaven beginnen en dan met de noodzakelijke uitgaven. Je moet ook aan de luxe toe zijn, anders moet je straks ver beneden je stand leven.

Nu leven we niet in een geestelijke welstand en welvaart, maar heel schraaltjes en tamelijk ondervoed. Daarom zou ik alle aandacht willen vragen voor de stand van het geestelijke leven (en heus niet piëtistisch-versmald of uitsluitend verticaal), alle aandacht voor het noodzakelijk geestelijk levensonderhoud. Over het algemeen zijn we aan de theologische luxe niet toe, wanneer we geestelijk ondervoed zijn.

Ik wil graag zo nu en dan een beetje mee-theologiseren, maar met mate, omdat matigheid ook op dit gebied een vrucht van de Heilige Geest is. Met mate, d.w.z. niet op een perverse, overtrokken manier alsof het geoorloofd is jarenlang over verbond en doop, over de aard van het schriftgezag, over Gen. 1-3 te polemiseren.

Vergeet ook niet, dat — al is de jeugd evenmin normatief als de ouderen — de jeugd in grote meerderheid zegt: Nu is het genoeg te geloven in God, de Vader, de almachtige Schepper van hemel en aarde en in Jezus Christus en wat daar verder volgt in de twaalf artikelen, maar of Gods schepping nu 6000 of miljoenen jaren oud is, interesseert ons niet. Wat ons wèl interesseert?

Leef ik als schepsel Gods en behandel ik mijn blanke en zwarte naaste als schepselen Gods. Leef ik als verloste zondaar in de vreugde van de verzoening om in alle levenskringen de verzoening tot stand te brengen? Wie deze accenten legt leeft meer uit het geloof in het Evangelie dan uit de theologische formuleringen.

Gaat u nu van links en rechts interrumperen met te zeggen: Ja, maar, u vergeet dit en dat? Toen antwoordde Elisa: "Ook ik weet het, zwijgt stil."

(Centraal Weekblad.)

J. Overduin.



THE WORLD AROUND US

NIXON AND VIETNAM

The much publicised talk by President Nixon on television a few weeks ago probably drew high Nielson ratings, but it is unlikely that many people who watched the program learned much. According to Nixon there are three ways open to the United States to end the war: immediate withdrawal, phasing the war out over an unspecified period of time, and a diplomatically negotiated peace. The last would obviously be the best, but judging by the result that has so far been obtained in Paris it is not likely that this will happen. Pulling all the troops out of Vietnam in the shortest possible time would be tantamount to handing the country over the Communists, so this is also not feasible. That seems to leave only one alternative, and the President spent much time explaining his situation.

According to Nixon, both a diplomatic peace or a phasing out effort will bring the desired result, namely the end of the war. The President was serious when he stated this; he meant what he said. But to any attentive listener this statement must have sounded as ironic as some of Johnson's statements as to why the United States must stay in Vietnam. Pulling the American troops out is not going to bring peace; all it will do is have the war fought by Vietnamese soldiers — those from the North and those from the South. Nixon knows this. He said also in his broadcast that great efforts were made to 'Vietnamize the war.' If this is what the American army is now doing, why does the President say that bringing the troops home will end the war? It will only end the war for the Americans.

Mr. Nixon stated how many efforts were made by him in bringing the war to a conclusion. He even wrote a personal letter to Ho Chi Ming suggesting peace, but all he received in return was a letter saying that the American troops had to be removed from Vietnam before peace would come. What else did Nixon expect? This has been Hanoi's attitude for years. They see the Americans as invaders into their territory, why should they change their mind?

The President was even more intransigent during the latter part of September when he publicly stated that he would under no circumstances be affected by the forthcoming moratorium on Vietnam. When a political leader begins to talk in this fashion, when he begins to suggest that a national concensus is of no importance or that it is beyond the power of men to reach concensus, then a gap has begun to open between himself and those who elected him to lead. Nixon was, in fact, telling the nation, Father knows best. The people reacted strongly to this patronizing tone; the President was assailed by a barrage of letters showing their resentment. Mr. Nixon finally answered one letter, from a student, to answer his critics. But in his answer he showed that he had not changed his mind, nor learned anything from the public outcry. The letter speaks down to the student, and by implication, to the nation; Father still knows best.

After the massive and peaceful moratorium Nixon has not changed his mind. The troops will stay in Vietnam; they will be withdrawn, but on a schedule that is, in effect, set by Hanoi. If there are few or no attacks by the Vietcong, the withdrawal will be speeded up; if there are many attacks, the American troops will stay longer. The President thus puts a great deal of trust in his troops. Yet, this is after months of revelations about the American army which are at best highly unpleasant, at worst make it the questionable instrument for teaching the South Vietnamese what to do. The Green Berets have been accused of assassinations, with the Central Intelligence Agency involved and the stain reaching even to the Presidency. High ranking army officers talk very casually of arms sales as if it was a daily occurance — and maybe it was. Sergeants seem able to set up whole networks within the army in order to make thousands of dollars on shady deals. And these are only the cases that have come to the public notice; how much more is there that the public does not know about?

How long will it take before the South Vietnamese are able to fight their own war? Officially, the tone is very optimistic, but reporters who have spent long periods of time in Vietnam return with less optimistic reports. The Vietnamese army is indeed increasing in numbers, it now has 345,000 soldiers. In addition, there are 46,000 men in the all-volunteer airborne division, marines and rangers. The regional and popular forces, used mainly as village security forces, have increased to 391,000. The air force and navy number 21,000 each. In addition there are the paramilitary forces — the national police and police field force, revolutionary development teams, Montagnard mercenaries and armed Viet Cong defectors — together they total 185,000. All told, there are over one million men under arms, with a further increase of 90,000 scheduled for this year.

This is an impressive figure. When the more than 500,000 American and 50,000 other allied troops are added to this, it gives the allies an eight-to-one superiority over the estimated 100,000 North Vietnamese troops and 100,000 Viet Cong who oppose them. Yet, the war is far from won. The way out now seems to be to train the South Vietnamese to be able to fight their own war. But if the war cannot be fought with the help of the more than half a million allied troops, how are the Vietnamese going to do it on their own?

Officially there is optimism. President Nguyen Van Thieu said a few months ago that his men were ready to take over the war right now, needing only air, artillery and supply support from the United States. American officials also say that they see a marked improvement in the ARVN (South Vietnamese army). Are they serious, or is this the same sort of information that is given out regarding the body count casualties of the enemy? Those who have been in Vietnam seem to feel that it is more the latter.

One senior U.S. officer confided to a reporter, "Improvement is painfully slow. It takes a tremendous amount of effort. If you want to be discouraged, this is the place to settle down." Of ten ARVN combat divisions, only one, the first, based at Hue, is rated as excellent by the U.S. headquarters. The paratroopers, marines and rangers are also said to be good, but the other divisions are rated from mediocre to terrible. The 25th division is not just called the worst division in the army, but the worst division in any army anywhere, and this covers a lot of ground. How can such an army stand up to the Viet Cong?

The Americans have begun by providing the Vietnamese with all the modern weapons in the U.S. arsenal. In mid-1968 a three year, $1 billion program began which was to ensure that by the middle of 1971 the Vietnamese would be one of the most modern equipped armies in the world. The ARVN already has the M-16 automatic rifles, M-60 light machine guns and M-79 grenade launchers; the regional and popular forces are scheduled to be equipped with them before the end of this year. Forty UH-21 helicopters have already been delivered and more are on the way. Fifteen hundred armoured personel carriers will also have been delivered by December. The U.S. army has ordered so many jeeps that Representative Robert L. F. Sikes of Florida complained to the House that it looked as if the Pentagon has as goal to put every Vietnamese soldier behind the wheel of a jeep.

(To be continued)

J. J. Bout

Waar vinden we de kerk

①

Dat is geen vraag- — zo zegt u misschien.

We weten toch nog wel waar de kerk is! — we belijden toch met Zondag 38 van de Heidelbergse Catechismus, "dat ik inzonderheid op de Sabbath, dat is op de rustdag, tot de gemeente Gods naarstiglijk zal komen, om Gods Woord te horen, de sacramenten te gebruiken, God de Here openlijk aan te roepen en de armen Christelijke handreiking te doen."?

Nu dan — die mensen die de catechismus maakten wisten de kerk te vinden op zondagmorgen en zondagavond; ze zeiden: "Het is de gemeente Gods" en ze voegden er aan toe: "Het is Gods wil dat we er naarstig (d.i. getrouw en geregeld) komen"; weten wij dat dan niet meer?

Toch zit die vraag in de lucht; voor mensen die oren hebben om te horen zit die vraag aan alle kanten in de lucht.

Er zijn mensen die op zondagavond de kerk niet meer weten te vinden; en dan moet er kunst en vliegwerk aan te pas komen; dan moet er wat worden geëxperimenteerd; dan moet de tegenwoordigheid des Geestes door iets meer dan de Dienst des Woords geloofwaardig worden gemaakt; en dan zal de kerk weer kunnen functioneren, weer herkenbaar zijn, naar men aanneemt.

Er zijn ook mensen, die op zondagmorgen de kerk niet meer weten te vinden, en naar men mij vertelde schreef een Hollandse dominee over de gave Gods gelegen in het uitslapen op de zondagmorgen, voor sommigen.

Het nieuwste wat op dit gebied werd getracteerd was te lezen in het oktober-nummer van het Hollands orgaan "Voorlopig"; in dat nummer schreef de medewerker Eibert Pruim:

> "Een groeiende groep christenen heeft geen aardigheid meer aan de zondagse kerkgang. Wat daar gebeurt slaat vaak nergens op. Kerkdiensten zijn geen werkvergaderingen, vinden ze. En ze blijven thuis, overigens vaak wel met een kruimeltje schuldgevoel. Het is goed ons dan te realiseren, dat kerkdiensten bezoeken maar **één vorm is van godsdienstoefening.**
>
> Misschien wel de minst geslaagde. Godsdienstoefening vindt ook en vooral elders en anders plaats; in huisgemeenten, in actiegroepen, in bijbelkringen, door middel van lectuur, in (politieke) werkgroepen, op beraadweekends, in besturen, in het gezin.
>
> Velen suggereren, dat dit secundaire vormen zijn van godsdienstigheid. De traditionele zondagmorgendienst is de primaire basisvorm, zeggen zij. Wij zullen heftiger moeten opkomen voor de veelvormigheid van de gemeente van Christus. En kunnen dus 's zondagsmorgens zonder schuldgevoelens thuisblijven. Een kerkdienst is maar één van de vele vormen van godsdienstoefening. Als we bij die andere vormen dan maar wel de acte de présence geven. Of liever: juist daar initiatieven ontwikkelen."

Tot zo ver de heer Pruim, die geen blad voor zijn mond neemt.

Naar zijn (en ik kan helaas niet zeggen: bescheiden) mening is de kerkdienst zoals wij die kennen, één van de mogelijke vormen van godsdienstoefening, misschien de minst-geslaagde; kunnen wij zondagsmorgens zonder schuldgevoelens daarvandaan blijven; als we dan maar een beter geslaagde vorm ervoor in de plaats stellen, zoals bv. lectuur (lees eens wat goeds!), werkgroepen (doe eens wat goeds), beraad (verzin eens wat goeds) en dergelijke.

Dat is de geavanceerde mening van Eibert Pruim, en het zou misschien aanbeveling verdienen aan dit Hollands radicalisme niet te veel aandacht te besteden, ware het niet, dat soortgelijke klanken ook in Canada nu en dan gehoord worden.

Kerkdienst - Woordbediening - ambt; is het werkelijk zo, dat we des zondags geroepen worden om in de gemeentelijke samenkomsten te horen naar de prediking van Gods Woord zoals dat met ambtelijk gezag tot ons komt? — of kunnen we, zoals ik eens iemand hoorde zeggen, soms meer zegen ontvangen in de vergadering van een Christelijke organisatie?

Waar vinden we de kerk? — vinden we ze niet overal waar twee of drie in de naam des Heren tezamen zijn? — en kunnen we daar dan niet van maken wat we zelf willen, mits het niet traditioneel is in de eerste plaats (initiatieven ontwikkelen, zegt de heer Pruim), ons sticht in de tweede plaats en ons activeert in de derde plaats?

Het kan zijn dat, als we over deze vraag nadenken, we een ontdekking doen. Dat is deze ontdekking, dat het zo radicaal nieuwe standpunt van de heer Pruim toch niet zo gloednieuw is als het wel lijkt; misschien schiet het u ineens te binnen, dat u er toch vroeger wel eens over hebt horen preken, al was dat dan niet bij de behandeling van het vierde gebod, maar bij dat van het tweede; en dat het toen in verband gebracht werd met wat in die tijd vaak "eigenwillige godsdienst" werd genoemd.

En dan werd er gewoonlijk op gewezen, dat er vroeger in Israel één centrale plaats was, waar heel het volk geroepen werd om saam te komen; als het volk dat niet deed, maar in grote vroomheid samenkomsten organiseerde op de hoogten, werd dat als een zonde aangerekend; en toen later Jerobeam in het kader van een menselijk volkomen gerechtvaardigde revolutie twee andere plaatsen centraal stelde met een zeer aantrekkelijke eredienst, werd dat de wortel van Israels val.

Het gebeurt nogal eens, dat men in dit verband een beroep doet op het "ambt van alle gelovigen"; met nadruk stelt men vast dat alle gelovigen in het ambt staan, persoonlijk verantwoordelijk tegenover God; en dat het speciale ambt van dienaar des Woords, ouderling en diaken, anders niet is dan een verbizondering of een speciale functionering van dit algemene ambt.

Nu is het merkwaardige dat de Nederlandse Geloofsbelijdenis op de enige plaats waar ze van dit ambt der gelovigen spreekt verklaart, dat "het ambt der gelovigen, volgens het Woord Gods, is, zich af te scheiden van degenen die niet van de kerk zijn, en zich te voegen tot de vergadering van de ware kerk." (art. 28); en dan wordt van die ware kerk gezegd in art. 30, dat ze geregeerd moet worden door de ambtsdragers, in de eerste plaats door dienaars en herders, die door God geroepen zijn om Zijn Woord te prediken en de Sacramenten te bedienen; en in art. 31, dat deze dienaars wettig beroepen moeten worden door de gemeente, en dat niemand zich in hun ambt mag indringen.

Dat ambt heeft dus inderdaad een bizonder karakter, en wie het op de wijze van de Amerikaanse democratie tot een functie van de gemeente maakt, bewijst aan die gemeente een slechte dienst; de voorzichtige Hervormde professor Bronkhorst vraagt zich in dit verband af, of het "verantwoord is de verantwoordelijkheid voor de trouw jegens de apostolische boodschap onderscheidsloos bij de gehele gemeente te leggen, en de ambtsdragers tot organen der gemeente te maken." (Schrift en Kerkorde, 1947, p. 247)

En Abraham Kuyper getuigt met grote nadruk van de unieke betekenis van de Sleutelmacht. Na erop gewezen te hebben, dat een kerk iets anders is dan een kring van vrienden van Jezus; dat zo'n kring van vrienden van Jezus gevonden wordt onder de Engelse Quakers, en onder de voorstanders van het Collegiale stelsel van kerkrecht; en dat hierin een eigenwillige vorm van godsdienst zich aftekent, schrijft hij: "Van zulk een optreden uit eigen beweging, van zulk een eigenwillige godsdienst, van zulk een in de grond Pelagiaans en Arminiaans bedoelen, weet de H. Schrift niets. Integendeel, alles wordt door Jezus uitdrukkelijk en nauwkeurig bepaald, besteld en voorbereid. Hij verklaart dat het met Jerusalem en Sions tempel uit is; . . . Hij kiest mannen uit, die Hij voorbereidt voor hun levenstaak; . . . Hij geeft hun last om de sacramenten van de heilige doop en het heilig avondmaal te bedienen. En Hij instrueert ze zo, dat ze op hun beurt weer andere mannen aanstellen, die in de gestichte kerken als voorgangers optreden. Het heeft er dus niets van, dat Jezus de loop der zaken, in overgeestelijke zin, aan der mensen goeddunken of vrijwilligheid zou hebben overgelaten. Integendeel, Hij Zelf regelt alles, bepaalt alles, stelt al wat nodig is in, en bakent geheel de weg af, waarlangs de beweging zal voortschrijden." (E Voto III, blz. 284)

En dan wijst Kuyper erop, dat Jezus deze mannen gemachtigd heeft en nog machtigt, "Hij houdt middellijk door de dienst van mensen zijn kerk in stand."

Het is alleen deze hoge opvatting van kerk en ambt, die de kerk leven en waarachtige aantrekkingskracht verleent: Christus tussen de kandelaren, die de sterren in zijn hand houdt.

Het verlies van deze gedachte betekent tevens het verlies van elke mogelijkheid om de kerk waarlijk te reformeren en op de weg der Reformatie te doen voortgaan.

Als er toch andere mogelijkheden zijn om te 'kerken', waarom zich dan nog zo druk gemaakt over die kerkvorm, die men als de 'minst-geslaagde' is gaan beschouwen? Natuurlijk, men kan er wat op de trom slaan; maar het eigenlijke concert wordt in andere regionen gespeeld.

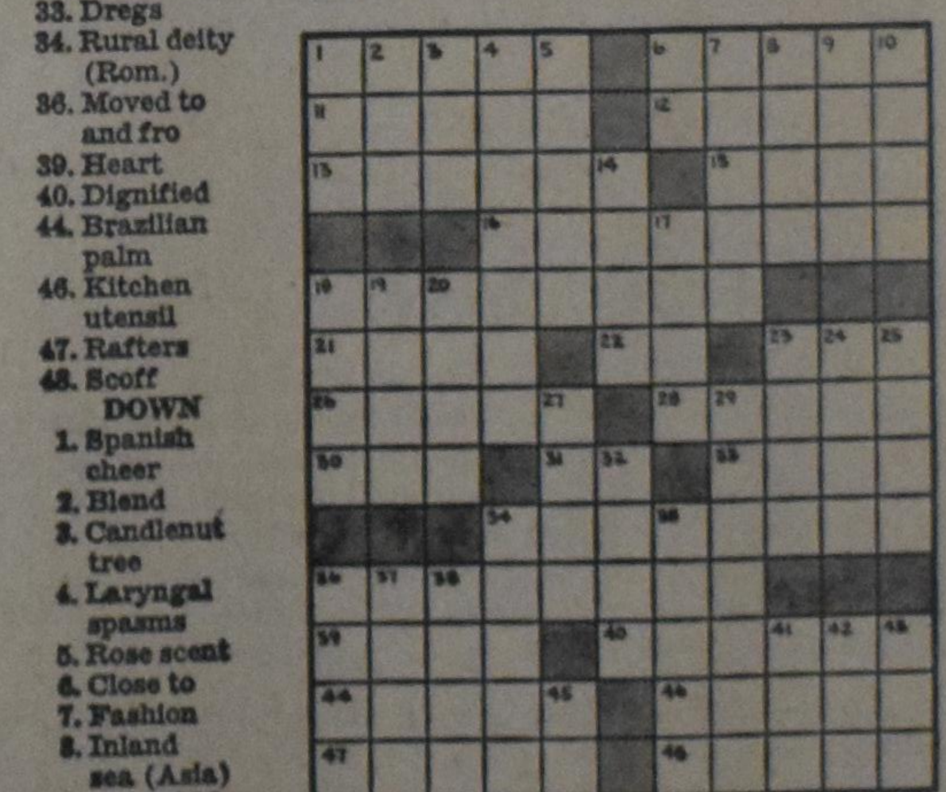
Men zij gewaarschuwd voor dit soort van beschouwingen; ze zijn op den duur de dood van de kerk.

Louis Praamsma.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS
1. City in Nebraska
6. Benefit
11. Boundary
12. Trunk
13. Demands
15. Festive
16. Space —— (pl.)
18. Soak
21. Riding whip
22. Toward
23. Obtain
26. Entertain
28. Majorca port
30. Son of Odin
31. Pronoun
33. Dregs
34. Rural deity (Rom.)
36. Moved to and fro
39. Heart
40. Dignified
44. Brazilian palm
46. Kitchen utensil
47. Rafters
48. Scoff

DOWN
1. Spanish cheer
2. Blend
3. Candlenut tree
4. Laryngal spasms
5. Rose scent
6. Close to
7. Fashion
8. Inland sea (Asia)
9. —— of Man
10. Wo[illegible] larvae (Afr.)
14. Young oyster
17. Cease
18. Begone
19. Coxey's, for instance
20. Journey
23. —— Ford
24. Ostrich-like bird (var.)
25. Soviet News Agency
27. Radiate
29. Arabian Night's hero
32. Old measures
34. Vapor
35. Shifts
36. Strikebreaker
37. Flexible tube
38. She-bear (Lat.)
41. Hole in one
42. —— shirt
43. Blunder
45. Part of "to be"





SOLUTION to previous Crossword Puzzle

Twee belangrijke besluiten

Onze Nederlandse briefschrijver bericht ons:

De Synode der Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland heeft twee belangrijke besluiten genomen, nl.

1e. toetreding tot de Wereldraad van Kerken;

2e. handhaving van de binding aan de belijdenis.

Het besluit om het lidmaatschap van de Wereldraad van Kerken aan te vragen is een logisch vervolg van de reeds vroeger genomen principiële beslissing, dat de grondslag van de Wereldraad geen verhindering was tot toetreden.

Ruim twintig jaar is deze zaak aan de orde geweest. De oud-secretaris van de Wereldraad, Dr. Visser 't Hooft, was een der gasten, die eerder op deze Synode het woord voerde over dit vraagstuk.

De thans genomen beslissing werd met grote meerderheid genomen. Zestig synodeleden stemden voor, twee predikanten en twee ouderlingen tegen, met één onthouding.

Prof. dr. M. H. Woudstra van Calvin College had nog een waarschuwend woord laten horen, maar de beslissing lag in feite reeds vast.

Wel werd gewaarschuwd tegen overspannen verwachtingen, o.a. prof. dr. L. v. d. Woude en door dr. G. de Ru, praeses van het moderamen van de Synode der Hervormde Kerk, die met de secretaris-generaal ds. F. H. Landsman aanwezig was.

Een beslissing die wellicht van grotere betekenis is, was die betreffende handhaving en instemming met de belijdenis.

Door de professoren Kuitert en Augestein van de Vrije Universiteit van Amsterdam was gepleit voor afschaffing van de ondertekening van en instemming met de drie Formulieren van Enigheid.

In het vijfde z.g. cahier voor de gemeente noemt prof. Augestein strenge binding aan de belijdenis niet typisch reformatisch. Bij een eerder gehouden discussie was prof. H. N. Ridderbos fel van leer getrokken, daarbij de eenzijdige houding van het dagblad "Trouw" scherp critiserende.

Het was duidelijk dat de Synode een verdere "leervrijheid" wenste tegen te gaan en zo viel op Hervormingsdag de volgende beslissing:

De synode **heeft kennis genomen** van

a. het deputatenrapport inzake de functie van en de binding aan de belijdenis;

b. verschillende stukken waarin kerkelijke vergaderingen over hetzelfde thema en over de aard en strekking van het bestaande ondertekeningsformulier een duidelijke uitspraak verzoeken;

c. door een aantal adressanten uitgeoefende aandrang, het bestaande ondertekeningsformulier onverkort te handhaven.

Mede gelet op de discussie **herinnert de synode er aan** dat de drie formulieren van enigheid als akkoord van kerkelijke gemeenschap uiteraard bindend gezag hebben.

Zij spreekt tevens uit

1. dat het gewenst en noodzakelijk is, ernstig de vraag onder ogen te zien, of en zo ja, hoe de kerk tot een nieuwe belijdenis zou kunnen komen op een voor onze tijd duidelijke wijze en in een voor onze tijd duidelijke taal.

2. dat bedenkingen tegen een wijze van inkleding of tegen de betoogtrant van de 3 formulieren van enigheid geen bezwaar behoeven te zijn om toch de volledige instemming als gevraagd in art. 24 K.O., te betuigen.

Voorts **besluit de synode** een deputaatschap te benoemen met de opdracht:

1. na te gaan of en in hoever er buiten de wijze van inkleding en betoogtrant van de formulieren van enigheid nog andere factoren zijn, die in de weg staan aan het vragen van een "volledige instemming" met deze belijdenisgeschriften;

2. te onderzoeken in hoever de sub 1 bedoelde factoren nader moeten worden omschreven, en zo ja op welke wijze;

3. na te gaan welke invloed zulks eventueel moet oefenen op de tekst van de ondertekeningsformulieren;

4. ernstig de vraag onder ogen te zien, of en zo ja hoe de kerk tot een nieuwe belijdenis zou kunnen komen op een voor onze tijd duidelijke wijze en in een voor onze tijd duidelijke taal.

5. hun rapport met voorstellen in te dienen bij de volgende synode en dit drie maanden voor het samenkomen der synode toe te zenden aan de kerken.

De synode **spreekt de verwachting uit**, dat alle ambtsdragers zich in het licht van het bovenstaande zullen gedragen naar hetgeen bepaald is in de ondertekeningsformulieren.

Tenslotte **besluit de synode** deze gehele beslissing ter kennis te brengen van de adressanten en van alle kerkeraden.

Alle aanwezige hoogleraren, te weten, de professoren Van der Woude, Nauta, Firet, Koole, Jonker en Hartveld, hadden tevoren in hun prae-advies hun stem aan dit besluit gegeven.

REORGANISATIE VAN DE NED. GEREF. SYNODE

In plaats van om de twee jaar zouden de gereformeerde kerken jaarlijks een synode moeten houden. Dit is nodig om in het kerkelijk leven "bij de tijd" te blijven. Tot deze conclusie komt een uitvoerig reorganisatie-rapport, dat bij de gereformeerde synode is ingediend door het studiedeputaatschap voor de werkwijze van de synode in samenwerking met de deputaten voor financiën en organisatie.

De synodes, die thans om de twee jaar bijeenkomen, krijgen steeds meer zaken te behandelen. De agenda is zo groot geworden, dat er vaak acht vergaderweken van vier tot vijf dagen voor nodig zijn om er doorheen te komen. Het rapport bevat verschillende suggesties om tot een meer efficiënte werkwijze te komen, o.a. door de instelling van een deputaatschap of raad voor gezamenlijke arbeid, die coördinerend kan optreden en het synodale beleid voorbereiden.

Men wil er naar streven door een aantal organisatorische maatregelen de duur van een jaarlijkse synode te beperken tot vier à vijf vergaderweken van drie dagen en dan bij voorkeur tegen het weekend, dus van donderdag tot en met zaterdag. Door de vrije zaterdag te benutten zullen meer mensen uit de jongere generatie zich een lidmaatschap van de synode kunnen permitteren. Op het ogenblik is dat voor velen onmogelijk en men treft dan ook vooral onder de ouderlingen verhoudingsgewijs veel gepensioneerden aan. De gemiddelde leeftijd van de ouderlingen in de huidige synode is 64 jaar.

Het rapport bepleit ook een reorganisatie van de deputaatschappen, die de opdrachten van de synode uitvoeren. Gesuggereerd wordt ruim dertig van deze deputaatschappen te groeperen in raden voor de diverse sectoren van kerkelijke arbeid, zoals het pastoraat, het diakonaat, de zending, de evangelisatie etc. Daardoor ontstaat een overzichtelijker geheel en dit kan een meer efficiënte behandeling in de synode bevorderen.

Ook bevat het rapport enige suggesties, die geen tijdsbesparing opleveren, maar die wel bevorderen, dat een synode in meer "eigentijdse" zin beantwoordt aan haar doel: een vergadering van kerken te zijn. In dit verband noemt het rapport o.a. de mogelijkheid van inspraak van speciale groeperingen en deskundigen, het organiseren van regionale hearings met synodeleden en de opzet van een ruimer informatiebeleid, zodat synoderapporten in het algemeen ook vooraf verkrijgbaar worden gesteld.



BOUNCING BABY ELEPHANT visited patients at Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. Glossy examines pocket of a little Indian girl from Northern Ontario who's been in the hospital for six weeks and hadn't had a visitor—or a smile—until she saw baby elephant.

to be ordered from summer- and winter catalogues.

TWO FASHION SHOWS

first show.

I ran into a fashion show one night
. . . Bending sweet lips to the microphone
the well-groomed model introduces
the "latest style," with her flashing smile
to the waiting gum-chewing crowd . . .

"Here we show you, dear ladies;
the colourful breast-boosting bra-dress
with the built-in natural look.
some love the low cut, some like the size,
You get lots of uplift ladies, for a fair price!
Here are hip-hugging pants and the crotch-creeping Mini.
Notice the scanty covering with this charming Bikini;
and a matching sunhat to protect your false tresses.

Todays footwear is designed for comfort,
square at the toe and chunky the heel.
some prefer them high, some like them low,
some love to walk fast, some like to walk slow.
The fur-lined gloves and shoulderbag
are matching accessories as you can see.
Yards of chains around a yielding waist
is the latest fad in phoney jewelry . . .

Garments are guaranteed until next season;
labeled "Haute Couture" to please everyone!

as recorded in Ephesians 6:14-20.

second show.

God in Heaven told his angel one night;
"Stop praising me for a moment, Michael
and tell me what my models on Earth
nowadays are wearing as the "latest style."
I still remember that they pranced around
in tightfitting girdles of dogma and doctrine.
And kept their lovely faces hidden
behind black shrouds of the burden of sin.
So Michael, go ahead and tell me . . ."

Michael raised the golden trumpet to his lips
and introduces "the latest to God and the Universe.

"A few models start wearing Your Armor, Lord;
a breastplate of Righteousness of perfect fit
kept in place with an adjustable belt of Truth.
Some have them narrow, some rave them wide;
some wear them loose, some wear them tight,
And a helmet of Salvation to match it.

Bound under their feet is the Gospel of peace.
God's first-class footwear fits all sizes.
Some choose the heels high, some want them low;
some like to walk fast, some like to walk slow.
The sword of the Spirit and the shield of Faith
are matching accessories as you can see.
The jewelry they wear is Israel-antique;
shackles and chains from 39 A.D.

And everything bears the hallmark of God
and is guaranteed until the Final Day . . .

d. verseveldt.

FROM PULPIT AND PEW

PAGE OF INFORMATION ON CHURCH LIFE - FOR THE REFORMED COMMUNITY

EDITED BY REV. F. GUILLAUME

Biblical Facts

If we like to be informed on the real issues of the new theology, we should study Harold O. J. Brown's excellent book "The Protest of a Troubled Protestant." Just recently it was reviewed in our paper by Dr. L. Praamsma. It renders big help in the present confusing situation. I present the following quotation to give an impression of what it is like:

"Christianity is based on certain events which are supposed to have happened here on this earth in real space and in real time, and to have meant something that we can understand (as well as much that we cannot understand). There is a considerable amount of historical evidence for the factuality of these events, just as for the factuality of the events of Roman history. The evidence available is not enough to compel a person to believe against his will, but it is certainly enough to render orthodox Christianity plausible and intellectually respectable. It is a well-known fact in British and American Inter-Varsity circles that when university scientists stand up for religion at all, it is usually for the doctrines of historic Christian orthodoxy — whether in its Protestant or Roman Catholic form. The tangible and factual claims of Christianity appeal to scientists precisely because they are tangible and based on facts. Experimental scientists tend to find the vague aspirations of supposedly modern theology meaningless, whereas orthodox theology, whatever it is, is not meaningless. If it is true, it is the most meaningful knowledge we can have; if false, it is dangerous, but not meaningless.

The essential connection of the Christian faith with certain real events does then permit a limited amount of legitimate objective, historical inquiry, and does justify a certain claim on the part of Christian theology to be a science.

Nevertheless the fact, or the account of the facts, if you will, quickly confronts even the most "objective" and "neutral" researcher with the claims of the God of Israel — and of the Christ Who says that He will return to judge the living and the dead. Once this contact has been made, neutrality is no longer possible: there is only faith and obedience, or disbelief and disobedience."



SCANNER

MIRACLE IN PHILADELPHIA A MULTI-RACIAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

(CAF Newsletter) — At Ninth and Lehigh Streets, downtown Philadelphia, you will find St. Simeon Episcopalian Church. The old structure, one proudly elegant, seems to dream of a better age, strangely impervious to the agonies of the multi-racial ghetto around it.

But appearances deceive. The rooms behind St. Simeon's stately auditorium are filled with the sounds of 65 happy children, mostly black, some white. They are the students of Philadelphia's "Central Christian School." This unique venture in Christian education is the result of the prayerful labors of some Christian leaders such as Rev. Harvey Davies and Rev. Wayne Brauning who, for several years, have brought the hope of the Word of God to Philadelphia's black ghetto. They and many other Christians realized that the crippling limitations of the ghetto schools can only add to the confusion among the young. In faith they decided to make a new beginning in education, a Christian day school.

The task seemed utterly hopeless. By the end of last August there was nothing, no building, no funds, no teachers. But God touched the heart of St. Simeon's rector, the heavy doors creaked open, sixty discarded desks were retrieved, four teachers volunteered, and on September 3 the Christian school was a reality.

If you wonder whether Christian education makes a difference go and visit St. Simeon. Black Christian leaders in Philadelphia have pointed out that hope for negro youth lies in Christian education where the whole need of the child is met in Christian vision, love and joy. It was an unforgettable experience to watch the children open up to the patient instruction of the four teachers, Miss Heggi, Miss Muchlitz, Mrs. Pennick, and Miss Tinglenberg.

On September 15 the first Parent-Teacher Society meeting was held, combined with a Christian Action Foundation (CAF) chapter meeting, since several CAF members have been helpful in getting the school project started. CAF national president, Louis Tamminga, addressed the meeting on the theme, With Christ I can do all things. It may well have been the most joyful school-society meeting ever held. Right in the middle of a discussion of almost insuperable problems a member proposed, Let us praise God, and spontaneously the song rang forth, Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow.

★

Scarborough C.R. Church put something to meditate on in its bulletin:

MONEY WILL BUY:

A bed, but not sleep,
Food, but not appetite,
A house, but not a home,
Luxuries, but not culture,
A Church-pew, but not HEAVEN.
Books, but not brains,
Finery, but not beauty,
Medicine, but not health,
Amusements, but not happiness.

— Anonymous.

★

[...] time. In the winter time with the visitors gone, the picture changes, however. A few weeks ago, there were only 22 people in the Dutch service, of which 7 were visitors, so that only 15 members of our own congregation were in that service. Perhaps we should raise the question: "Is the Dutch service still necessary?" Or perhaps this question: "Is the Dutch service still necessary twice a month?" Or this one: "Should we discontinue the Dutch services during a few months in the winter time, and then next year begin again in the Spring?" Maybe this is the time to think about that — anyone who would like to offer helpful comments, please inform your consistory. In a discussion we can help each other!

★

The Taber, Alta. Sunday School children are going to sing in the church before the service once per month, instead of the regular congregational singing. (Taber church bulletin.) This announcement could serve as an example for other churches.

★

In the St. Catharines Church Bulletin Dr. A. Vandermaas wrote the following letter to the parents:

"Dear Parents,

It is remarkable how often children that attend the baby-sit in the church become ill on Tuesdays. The reason for this is not difficult to find. We only have to know that the ordinary infections in children (nose, throat, ears, etc.) take about three days to appear. If we then see that children with dirty noses, coughs and other obvious abnormalities are regularly brought to the nursery, the answer is clear. Our nursery is in reality a *breeding ground for infections*. Fathers and Mothers have you ever tried to realize what this can mean? Certainly, these illnesses usually recover quite readily with proper treatment. However, it occurs often enough yet that a child ends up with a nasty ear or sinus infection that needs weeks of treatment, expensive medications and sometimes even surgery, with the added risk this brings with it. And then fortunately rarely, other much more serious diseases may follow as complications.

There are parents, who have realized this unfortunate situation and their reactions has been to stop using the nursery. I have also had to advise this to a few patients. But why don't we allow the baby-sit to be what it is meant for: A PLACE WHERE HEALTHY CHILDREN ARE CARED FOR WHEN THERE IS NOBODY AT HOME TO DO SO? Another feature of the nursery is the frequent presence of a few toddlers that cry from the beginning until the end. These children apparently cannot get adjusted to the environment the baby-sit offers. The reasons for this may be several, but whatever they are, I want to point out that it is not advisable to force children into a situation that obviously disturbs them. Contrary to what is often thought, this will not help them to get used to the situation or train them for life. To cause fears in children repeatedly and knowingly, can lead to character changes or other reactions. If the above shortcomings could be corrected, this would improve the baby-sit a great deal.

Dr. A. Vandermaas



BUILDING GOD'S HOUSE

In 1 Kings the Bible contains a detailed description of Solomon's building of the Temple.

All of a sudden in the midst of several technical remarks we read in verse 7, "The house was built of stones dressed at the quarry; there was no sound of hammer, chisel, or any other iron tool while the house was being built." This often forgotten and neglected text is worth our closest attention.

The builders in those days had to realize that not they were the builders but that God Himself builds His own House.

Through Isaiah God asked the humiliating question, "Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool; what manner of house would you build for Me, and where would be the place of My rest?" The people should have answered, 'Lord, there is none; we do not deserve any right to do this for Thee." But the Lord continued, "I will look favorably upon that man who is humble, feels crushed in spirit, and trembles at My word."

Solomon's temple was built in complete silence because the building was God's secret. It was His mystery. God could not really live in that House. The way it was constructed served as a symbol that God wants to live with man.

Do you realize how this secret still is present? We build churches. We are active in home missions and foreign missions. We are engaged in many other kinds of Kingdom work.

However, be not confused. All this action is not God's Temple. Even today the house of God rises in this world, but how and where it rises is beyond our control.

Jesus Christ called Himself God's Temple. And he makes all His own God's House. He opens human hearts through His Spirit and Word. He is still doing this in the midst of all the hustle and bustle of the world, and no man-made barrier of iron or bamboo, if enmity or oppression can keep Him out.

Don't you know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

What a mystery! This is God's secret! The Temple of God is holy, which temple YOU are!

LEGALISM

Straight form Latin: legalis, from lex, law: meaning: close conformity to law. Legalist: one who advocates legalism. The heart suffers much if legalism is being driven to an extreme.

HITHER and YON

Problems are still piling up for Philadelphia's multi-racial Central Christian School. Funds are low. The make-shift arrangements at St. Simeon Church cannot last long for a growing school. An old brick twelve-room school, one block away from St. Simeon, now for sale ($100,000), would be an ideal solution. A chance of a lifetime. Should the school society buy it? But there is not even a building fund. Will other Christians help? Isn't it the Christian calling in the world to keep miracles going? The Christian Action Foundation address is Box 185, Sioux Center, Iowa 51250.

★

The All Ontario Diaconal Conference of the Christian Reformed Churches in Eastern Canada presented me with the first four issues of "Service In Deed," the diaconal magazine, published by the A.O.D.C. This paper means a big help for the deacons in the East. Congratulations! I quote a few selections from the first (introductory) article:

"It is our pleasure to present to you, the deacons of Eastern Canada, the first issue of our humble diaconal magazine, "Service In Deed." Humble is the appearance, humble its aim: to serve.

"Service In Deed," that name speaks for itself. It tries to say what is typical in the diaconal mandate. To do, to act in the name of Him who sends us. Comforting deeds through helping hands! What a privilege! What a responsibility!

The interesting thing in that name is that you read it also in *two* words, "Service, Indeed!" Then it stresses the urgency of our mandate. Indeed, there is need and distress all over, serve now! That the world may know, that there is a Helper!

May God bless this new beginning so that we will be able to serve Him more effectively.

The Publication Committee,
Rev. K. Hart, Chairman
P. Zwart, Secretary
M. Tulp, M.S.W.
M. Booy

All correspondence should be send to "Service In Deed," A.O.D.C., Box 235, Grimsby, Ont."

Acton C.R.C. reported about classical discussions and decisions on EVANGELISM:

Classis Huron adopted a statement which says, "We have failed to reach out in evangelism because of the spiritual deadness within our churches. Therefore, we would urge the consistories to call the congregations together to discuss this problem and to report on the results of these meetings to the Classical Home Missions Committee before the next meeting of Classis."

A lengthy discussion followed. The chairman pointed out that it is not enough to live the Christian lives which invite questions concerning the 'hope that is within you' at the personal level. Christ demands from us that we as Christians unitedly reach out into our neighbourhoods. Contrary to the common opinion among us, our problem is not in the first place how to go about this outreach, the first hurdle is that we must be deeply convinced in our hearts that this task belongs to all of us. Therefore Classis wants us to meet as congregations. Programs carried out from the top down without the enthusiastic support and participation of the grass roots (all the members of the congregation) will get us nowhere.

★

Ottawa-East C.R.C. enjoyed a fruitful discussion between consistory and congregation. The bulletin published the topic, SUNDAY, THE LORD'S DAY:

Positive comments were made on attendance at the second service. Nature of our second service to make it different from the morning service needs our consideration. More services for children was suggested and also more sermons on issues of today.

★

In Welland Junction, Ont., something very worthwhile is being tried out:

This week, you will be contacted about informal "get-togethers" in each other's homes. There seems to be a lack of meaningful person-to-person confrontation as to what the Scriptures demand in this secular age. It is felt that by talking to one another about our task as Christians on a more personal level, we will grow in our "spiritual" awareness and our love for each other. Let us all try to cooperate in this venture to help each other in our daily living.

★

The same is being done in Brockville, Ont.:

GROW GROUPS. At the meeting of the Evangelical Committee it was decided to form "Grow groups," little groups of 4 or 5 couples coming together once a month to share their faith and to learn from God's Word. It was suggested that these groups come together on Sunday nights after the evening service at somebody's home, starting next week.

★

PLEASE, NOTE!

"Pulpit and Pew" of October 23 gave information on "Attention Older People." I received word that the honor tributed to Dresden C. R.C. should go to Chatham C.R.C. The initiative to the magnificant action for older people (reported in the Dresden bulletin) was made by the Church of Chatham.

★

THE DUTCH SERVICE:

Many churches in Canada keep the Dutch service alive and a good number of their members are still thankful for that arrangement. However, the details about how and when differ tremendously. The following bulletin announcement, puposedly given without any reference, give a good impression of the problems surrounding the Dutch service:

For the last number of years we have had two Dutch services in a month, on the first and on the third Sunday of the month. During the summer months there seems to be quite some interest for these services, as can be seen in the attendance which usually reaches between 55 and 65 in the summer [...]

TRY IT

No. 8

A retired minister should be a good time user.

Solution No. 7:

Paradise (from "apes raid")

AN AMERICAN DELEGATE IN HOLLAND

Dr. Martin Woudstra, professor in Old Testament at Calvin Seminary addressed the Synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Holland. Here follows the main part of his speech.

Wij trachten ons werk te doen in getrouwheid aan onze Zender, die gezegd heeft dat het volk van God het zout is van de aarde. Daarbij gaan wij er van uit dat in de prediking Christus en die gekruisigd centraal moet staan. Deze waarheid van de centrale en alomvattende betekenis van Christus' zoendood wordt, zo menen wij, het heerlijkst uitgesproken in de Gereformeerde belijdenisgeschriften die wij met u onderschrijven. Die belijdenissen, ofschoon honderden jaren oud en dus historisch bepaald, fungeren onder ons als Formulieren van Enigheid.

Wij tellen thans 281.500 leden, 648 gemeenten in de Verenigde Staten en Canada, en 559 predikanten. Ons buitenlands zendingswerk wordt verricht in landen in Azië, Zuid-Amerika en Afrika. Wij hebben ook een zich steeds uitbreidend werelddiakonaat. In Noord-Amerika zelf arbeiden wij onder Negers, de Chinezen en de Zuid-Amerikanen en bedrijven ook verder intensief het evangelisatiewerk.

De sociologische problemen van de moderne samenleving laten ons niet onberoerd, al wachten wij ons als kerk van Christus er voor ons door de sociologie de wet te laten voorschrijven. In het besef geroepen te zijn als Gods volk in deze wereld te verkeren terwijl ons burgerschap elders ligt zoeken wij het geweten onzer kerkleden zo te bewerken dat zij, hetzij als enkeling of als lid van een grotere gemeenschap, christelijk kunnen reageren op de vragen van deze tijd. Daarbij trachten wij ons te onthouden van een nieuwe verkerkelijking van het leven die zich thans allerwegen dreigt voor te doen.

De vragen van de oecumene genieten ook bij ons grote belangstelling. Wij streven de eenheid na van alle belijders in Christus en vergenoegen ons niet met een verwijzing naar het denominationalisme. Reeds in het voor u zo bange jaar 1944 werden in onze kerken waardevolle richtlijnen opgesteld t.a.v. onze houding jegens andere kerken. In deze richtlijnen werd niet alleen gesproken over contacten met kerken van gereformeerde signatuur maar werden ook niet-gereformeerde, ja zelfs Rooms-katholieke en Oosters Orthodoxe kerken binnen de gezichtskring getrokken. Wij menen voorts dat oecumenisch zijn en oecumenisch handelen niet beslist afhangt van het al of niet lid zijn van één of meer oecumenische organisaties, aangezien oecumenisch zijn met het waarlijk kerk-zijn onmiddellijk is verbonden en daarmee samenvalt.

Wat betreft de Basis van de Wereldraad van Kerken daarin beluisteren wij schriftuurlijke klanken. Toch menen wij dat zij in het huidige theologische klimaat niet voldoende duidelijk geformuleerd is om alle dwaalleer buiten te sluiten. Wanneer Gereformeerden waar ook ter wereld naar de Schriften Christus willen belijden als God en Zaligmaker zullen zij, dit is mijn persoonlijke mening, duidelijk moeten maken of dit de Schriften zijn van de huidige zgn. Bijbelse theologie of die van de belijdenis der Reformatie. Tussen die beide gaapt een beduidende kloof, ook al kan er van de Bijbelse theologie veel goeds gezegd worden.

Als broeder sprekend tot broeders moet ik u tevens berichten dat sommige recente ontwikkelingen binnen uw kerkverband bij ons in brede lagen deining hebben veroorzaakt. Uw afgevaardigde naar onze synode heeft jl. juni uitvoerig stilgestaan bij de veranderingen die bij u hebben plaatsgevonden.

Het is u wellicht bekend dat onze synode haar deputaten voor interkerkelijk contact opdracht heeft gegeven na te gaan of deze veranderingen ook aanleiding zouden moeten zijn om onzerzijds tot een veranderde houding jegens u te geraken. Natuurlijk wensten wij allen dat zulk een instructie niet nodig geweest was. Dat ze gegeven werd geeft blijk van het serieus opvatten van onze kerkelijke correspondentie.

Op de breedvoerige uiteenzetting over herroepen van het besluit van Assen 1926 door uw afgevaardigde aan onze synode geboden kan om des tijds wille hier niet nader worden ingegaan.

Wel wilde ik zeggen dat ik meen dat Gereformeerde Schriftverklaarders als regel wel oog hebben gehad voor het tijdgebondene van de bijbelse voorstellingswereld. Maar zij hebben er zich voor gewacht die Bijbel te maken tot niet meer dan een document waarin Israel's belijdenis van zijn God tot uitdrukking kwam. **Methodisch gesproken** komt het in de huidige "Bijbelse" theologie niet verder dan tot deze erkenning. Kunnen zij die de Gereformeerde belijdenis onderschrijven hiermee genoegen nemen?

Inmiddels zou het onjuist zijn te doen alsof onzentwegen geen belangrijke vragen zouden leven. In dat licht moet worden gezien de instelling van een uitgebreide studie commissie die tot taak zal hebben aard en omvang van het Schriftgezag te bestuderen. Tevens zal deze commissie de methode van Schriftverklaring die thans door sommige niet met name genoemde Gereformeerde theologen gevolgd wordt critisch te beschouwen in het licht van Schrift en belijdenis. Het besluit tot instelling van deze studiecommissie is niet overhaast tot stand gekomen. Reeds in 1968 was er een voorstel om iets dergelijks te doen. Toen werd voorgesteld om de verschillende leringen die door professoren en docenten in de Gereformeerde Kerken, een zusterkerk, waren gepubliceerd te bestuderen bij het licht van Schrift en belijdenis. Op dit voorstel is de Synode toen niet ingegaan. Zij meende o.a. dat zulks voortijdig zou zijn geweest. Het kon als indringing worden beschouwd binnen maatregelen die de Gereformeerde Kerken zouden willen treffen aangaande deze dingen en kon dus als een gebrek aan vertrouwen worden uitgelegd.

Doch in 1969 werd het voorstel tot het instellen van een studiecommissie herhaald. Hierbij werden nieuwe elementen naar voren gebracht. Vooral het herderlijk aspect kreeg de nadruk. De nieuwe leringen, zo werd bij de Synode in het genoemde voorstel opgemerkt, hadden verwarring veroorzaakt en ondermijnden de confessionele eenheid der kerk. Bovendien was er inmiddels via de Gereformeerde Kerken zelve een verzoek tot de bestudering van enkele aspecten van het Schriftvraagstuk aan de leden van de Gereformeerde Oecumenische Synode voorgelegd.

Om al deze redenen heeft de synode van 1969 toen tot de instelling van de bovengenoemde studiecommissie besloten. Het doel van deze commissie is heel beslist het geven van pastoraal advies. Onze kerken die zo nauw met de uwe verbonden zijn raken in verwarring. Aan die verwarring mag niet langer dan strikt noodzakelijk is worden toegegeven. Het gaat om het heil van de kudde van Christus en daarom juist om het heil der wereld. Als één van de leden van deze commissie is het mijn voornemen met openheid en in het besef van de moeilijkheid van de opdracht mijn werk te doen. Misschien kan mijn langdurig verblijf in Europa ertoe dienen met sommigen uwer theologen samen te spreken tot precisering van de geschilpunten en tot opheldering van mogelijke misverstanden.

Ik zal de verleiding weerstaan u uitvoerig te spreken over onze recente uitspraken over de rassenkwestie en die over oorlog, vrede, dienstplicht en dienstweigering. Ook vermeld ik hier slechts terloops dat de synode van 1969 een studie heeft geautoriseerd over de aard van de kerkelijke ambten en dat is gedaan naar aanleiding van de plaats van de kerkelijke werkers, de zgn. layworkers in ons midden. De tijd ontbreekt om dit alles nader toe te lichten. Het maandbulletin van de Geref.Oecumenische synode houdt u wel enigszins op de hoogte.

Geachte Praeses, wij in de Christian Reformed Church willen naast en met u trachten aan het Evangelie van de gekruisigde en opgestane Christus in deze wereld gestalte te geven tot aan Zijn wederkomst op de jongste dag. Het is onze bede dat er niets moge zijn dat dit gezamenlijk streven in de weg zal staan. Daartoe beware de Here ons allen bij de trouw aan de waarachtige en volkomen leer der zaligheid opdat van het beleven van die leer niet alleen de kerk maar ook de volken der wereld nogmaals de rijke vruchten mogen plukken."

A DUTCH DELEGATE IN THE U.S.A.

Dr. Douwe van Swigchem, minister of the Gereformeerde Kerk of Amsterdam, addressed the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in the United States. Here follows the main part of his speech.

A third point is to be dealt with more elaborately; the decision of our Synod of 1967 to revoke the resolutions of Assen in 1926.

This surely has been a turning point in our history, and concern is understandable. But better than to be concerned is to study on problems too long only passed by, to work hard, together, and with confidence.

History proves that the Word of God remains through the ages, always mighty to convert sinners and to change the life of whole nations. But the Word of God should not be identified with our explanations, traditions, doctrines, and even confessions, and I think that is a true reformed principle expressed e.g. in the Belgic Confession, Art. 5.

One's opinions on the **meaning** of some chapter or books of the Bible may change, and it is always a doubtful and dangerous way, when the Church declares one exegesis obligatory. One example out of many: Solomon's Song. In the days of the Reformation it was explained totally symbolic. Every flower or tree mentioned in it had not a literal but a spiritual meaning. **Nowadays** the common opinion also among Orthodox scholars is that the bride was a real bride and the trees are real trees. Yet nobody would charge the translators of the Statenbijbel with heresy in their marginal notes on Solomon's Song. And the message of this book stands now far more clear before our eyes than it did ever before, with that prophetic force and importance also for our day. "I charge you, that ye stir not up nor awake love . . ."

Why then be alarmed when we are aware that we have to look for the meaning of the first chapters of Genesis in another direction than our fathers did? If I believe — as I do — that God gave us a marvelous picture in Genesis 1 of His almighty deeds in the creation of the world, am I really to believe that He intended to instruct us that the sun was created after the creation of the earth, or three days after the creation of light itself? No. It is not the meaning of the Holy Spirit to give us geological, astronomical or prehistorical details but a poetic panorama.

Many of us are convinced, and are convinced by the evidence of Scripture itself, even by the inspired words used, that we have to look upon Chapters 2 and 3 in the same way.

That does **not** mean that we deny the fall, no more that we deny God's creation. It only involves that we don't know the details. The fall was a historic event that took place some day in the distant past maybe hundreds or thousands of years ago. But God gave us through the author of Genesis the story of that fall in a poetic manner, at the same time sublime and childlike, at the same time deep and comprehensible for every man of every nation and in all times.

We have dealt with those chapters in the past in a way which did no justice to them as oriental and ancient ways of thinking and expressing truth. We were rather **rationalistic** in our approach.

This is a point of special importance.

Doctrinal opinions have **always** been influenced by the times in which they were draft. It could not be otherwise, because doctrine is trying to repeat in our own words and in contemporary ways of thinking, what the Holy Spirit said in the Word of God. The philosophy of Greece influenced the theology of the fathers and the Middle Ages, and the Reformation was in a way a process of purifying, of getting away from this syncretism. But also reformed theology is not infallible, it too is influenced by its surroundings! In confronting with rationalism and biblical criticism, in trying to answer the questions they put forword to orthodox theology, we often unconsciously adopted also a rationalistic view on the Bible. We tried to solve exegetical problems and to harmonize difficult texts too logically. We were so familiar with these chapters as they were explained and then retold, that you may be shocked when you are confronted with their real meaning, but therefore you've not the right to say that I'm not believing the Word of God! Every page of it! I apologize for speaking personally, I'm only one out of thousands of Dutch Reformed pastors and laymen who would say the same things.

Brothers, for me, the Word of God now stands before me more majestic, more eternal, than when I was a boy and had many doubts and questions about Genesis. To quote again the Belgic Confession: When I was twenty, I believed that these chapters were true because the Church said so, but now I believe they are true because the Spirit testifies that when I read them. In my eyes this new conviction is a purification, a reformation, and a gift of God.

Nobody in our churches however is **obliged** to think the same way as here expressed. But the vast majority in our churches is convinced that it would be **wrong** to insist that the literal exegesis of all the details of Genesis 3 ought to be declared the only true faith.

This is the opinion not only of one or two professors, but of all faculty members both in Amsterdam and in Kampen. In the standing committee that prepared the decision was one minister who held the opposite meaning and was in favour of maintaining the Assen decision, but at the G.S. he only got **1 vote.**

Here rises a question that I would like to ask **you**. What could be the reason that in the Netherlands the majority is in favor of all these developments, while among you they are met with much more concern, disapproval and even suspicion. We have only a small group of concerned people, say 10%, whereas I'm told you've 50%. What causes that difference?

I can only judge of our own churches and try to find out what caused so many changes within a few decades.

One point is that our generation is deeply shocked and changed in mind by the war, the German occupation and all that followed, including the nuclear threat. But staying nearer by home or rather by church, we find another point.

During the last 50 years we have partly been forced into, but to a large extent initiated ourselves, a thorough and increasing confrontation with the world around us, through the work of hundreds of youth evangelists, student pastors, industry pastors, home mission workers, authors, people who started talks with irreligious, and so on.

There was some concern about all that activity. Shortly after the war we had rather fervent discussions in our church press on this theme: What comes first, preserving the heritage or fulfilling the church's mission to the world? Some people, like the late Prof. K. Dijk said: When you don't preserve, you'll have nothing to proclaim. But others, like the pastors Overduin and Wiersinga answered — and they had it! — When we don't proclaim and propagate the Gospel we'll not be able to preserve anything except a petrified church. For the essence of the church of Christ is even its mission to the world. Its right to exist lays in the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Redeemer, and not in a concern for the spiritual welfare of a club of members. Their spiritual welfare will be best secured when they all are evangelists by words and deeds.

We **had** all these doubts, now we are **through it**. We are aware of the change, of the joy and danger of the glory and the misery of being a church in the World.

But after having taken that corner we could expect more changes in our ways of thinking. When you try to make yourself understandable to an atheist or agnostic, like St. Paul on the Areopagus you'll find that it matters much **how** you put the Gospel forward and how the Church itself **answers** the demands of the Gospel.

This is not a process of adaptation but more of self-examination. It became clear to us that not every position held traditionally by the Reformed churches was really biblical, that we had to purify our belief. It became also clear to us, that we had failed to do justice to the exploited and discriminated laborers in the beginning of the industrial era, and that when we fail again to preach and to do righteousness to underdeveloped nations and to social injustice in our own nation, the church will miss a God given chance for a very long time. Is not that in accordance with the famous slogan of Abraham Kuyper: "No square inch on the whole earth whereof Christ the Lord doesn't say: "Mine?"

But when the prophet Amos, or James the brother of Jesus, would be preaching here, I think they would be charged as Communists.

We have no time to lose. The Lord is speeding up towards the completion of His Kingdom. We feel that we are doing now what we should have done earlier. A growing number of young people in our churches is hyper-critical towards all ecclesiastical institutions. This should raise more concern and anxiety than all the other points mentioned. Most of them have **not** lost their faith in Jesus Christ, thank God, though many are in danger of losing every hold. But they have lost their faith in a church that restricted its message to a diminishing religious 'province' of life, was unaware of the critical function of the Gospel and identified itself to a large extent with an economic system that causes the rich to become even richer and the poor to stay even more behind, with a democracy that holds up revolutionary changes, with political systems based on white supremacy and power and a balance of terror.

Our churches struggle to find their way in the light of the Word of God between unwarranted revolutionarism and more unwarranted traditionalism. I come to you with a plea for understanding, for prayer, and for cooperation in theological and practical research, that we may stick together as reformed people and find ways for a world in desperate need of faith and confidence, of hope and love.

I MET DR. DOUWE VAN SWIGCHEM

BY DR. R. KOOISTRA

It was on Friday and it was the 13th of June — but we are not superstitious — that Dr. Douwe van Swigchem addressed the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. Article 34 of the Acts reports that Rev. R. W. Popma (of Trenton) introduced the *fraternal delegate* and that I responded for Synod.

Van Swigchem's speech was reproduced in full in the Acts of 1969, supplement 54, pp. 478-481. He dealt first with some minor changes as the new hymnal and female officebearers to speak more in particular on a major point: the decision of the Synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland in 1967 to revoke the solutions of Assen in 1926.

Reactions

It soon became clear that not everybody in the Christian Reformed Church was happy with the views expressed in a very fraternal as well as in a very masterly manner by our delegate from the Netherlands. If I remember correctly I expressed some concern about our relationship in my response, but — for the rest — I referred to 1 John 5:1, 5. "Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God . . . Who is it that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" In this connection I urged the brethren here and there to keep on listening to each other to find the ways on which the Holy Spirit leads the church in our days.

My words led the Editor of *De Wachter*, the Rev. William Haverkamp, to the question whether I agreed with the Rev. D. J. Couvee, who in *Gereformeerd Weekblad* had suggested that we must try to find the solution of our differences according to the *Johanneic rule* (Johanneische maatstaf): the confession of Christ as the Son of the living God.

My answer to this question would require more space than I intend to use at this time. Be it sufficient to state that the apostle John indeed points — in these words — to the heart of the Gospel. Couvee is right when he thinks that those who agree with the apostle are members of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, on the other hand, this is not the end of the discussion. To think this would be to say that the body is healthy as long as the heart is functioning. We all know that there is much more to the problem of health than only this. If you have complaints and you consult your doctor, he may very well *begin* with listening to your heart-beat but he certainly will not *limit* his examination to this action. (I hope to write more about the function of the confession in the near future.)

Another, not too favourable reaction was that of the Editor of *The Banner*, the Rev. J. VanderPloeg, who accompanied his report on the address of brother Van Swigchem this comment: ". . . some of us listened with heavy hearts, especially because of what was said about the interpretation of the opening chapters of Genesis. Although Dr. van Swigchem may be commended for his forthrightness and honesty, it was mystifying and disillusioning to find that this address could be so generously applauded at a Christian Roformed Synod, applause in which some of us could not honestly join . . ."

By way of chain-reaction these words of *The Banner*-editor resulted in a letter of Mr. W. Geelhoed in *Voices*.

This letter opens with the following complaint about those who depart from the "common folks":

(Continued on page 10)

I met Dr. Douwe van Swigchem

(Continued from page 9)

". . . as we read it, we wonder how far the intellectuals and the commoners are apart. How far have the learned and sophisticates drifted from their moorings, and is the sea of knowledge so far beyond our grasp, that we will no more be able to attain? Has the old-fashioned Bible become so outmoded that it cannot be considered genuinely true, relevant for this age? And is the *historicity* of God's revelation to man, which has always been very dear to our hearts, not to be considered authentic, and priceless any more?"

He then refers to the distinction between believers and unbelievers, to suggest that there is now a third possibility, writing: "How it must please the devil that there are now three classes of distinction — the group who believes that the Word of God is all what it ever was and hoped to be; a second group, who would like to believe only those portions of Scripture that they can rationalize and believe to be true because they can find proof that biologically, archeologically, and geologically confirm that it was so; (they do not hesitate to question any portion of Genesis, the miracles of the escape of Jonah, Daniel and his three friends; or in the New Testament, the escape of Peter from prison, and other accounts) and the third group is ever the same as always, those who deny God and his Word, and look askance at all those who are so outmoded as to believe that there is a hereafter, or a heaven and a hell."

Finally he accuses Van Swigchem of "casting aspersions on the veracity of Genesis and thereby also of other parts of the Bible."

Now it should be noted that Van Swigchem said in his address: "The fall was an historic event that took place some day in the distant past . . ." In doing this, he, like *many others* in the Netherlands, takes exception to certain statements of Dr. Kuitert with regard to Genesis. I often wish that the people here in Canada and in the United States would take time to listen and to read. Not all people in the Netherlands say exactly the same. Not all people who appreciate certain parts of Kuitert's theology agree with every last statement he had made. There are several chapters in Kuitert's theology which I personally would not be able to defend — and I have written this openly.

But what about Van Swigchem belonging to a third group? A group that accept and reject parts of the Scriptures according to their scientific findings? Van Swigchem's clear answer is: ". . . you haven't the right to state that I'm not believing the Word of God. Every page of it! I apologize for speaking personally."

In *De Wachter* Editor Haverkamp deals again with Van Swigchem (14 October, 1969) who in his articles has denied that the Christian Reformed Church in the U.S.A. wonders whether the *Gereformeerde Kerken* in the Netherlands are still to be considered to be sister churches. Van Swigchem wrote that it cannot be justified to harness the Christian Reformed Church to the cart of those who are troubled by the later developments in *De Gereformeerde Kerken*. According to Rev. Haverkamp the Christian Reformed Church does not want to discontinue the sisterly relationship with *De Gereformeerde Kerken* but, nevertheless, is worried about that relationship as is apparent not only from the decision taken in response to the Fruitland Overture but even more from the mandate given to the Inter-Church Relations Committee, which reads:

"Synod instructs the Inner-Church Relations Committee to consider whether any of the changes which have occurred in the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodaal) would warrant a change in our relationship to these churches and to advise the next synod of its findings."

I agree. This mandate sounds somewhat alarming. Let us hope that the Inter-Church Relationship Committee will proceed carefully and with prudence and love in the fulfillment of its difficult mandate. To me, it seems to be hardly possible that one year would be enough to complete such a big order responsibly.

Finally, I have noticed, also on local levels signs of disturbance caused by the visit of Dr. Van Swigchem. Hence I welcomed the opportunity I had to talk with him and here are my questions and his answers.

Our Talk

— Dr. van Swigchem could you give us some personalia for our paper?

— Certainly, I am Douwe van Swigchem. Call me Douwe. Notice also the involved way of writing my name, especially the *gch* in the middle. I was born in Amsterdam, but raised in Middelburg. I studied theology at the Free University and began my work as a minister in the inner-city work in The Hague. This was in 1945, just after the second world war.

— Is it not right that your doctoral thesis also deals with evangelism?

— Yes, indeed, I wrote on *The Church as a Means to Evangelism* or to be exact *Het missionair karakter van de Christelijke Gemeente volgens de brieven van Paulus en Petrus* and defended my thesis in 1955. (Note: Our Calvin Seminary Professor Dr. Carl G. Kromminga who became a doctor in theology at the Free University in 1964 on a thesis *The Communication of the Gospel through Neighboring* quotes Van Swigchem extensively, R.K.)

— What happened after the Hague?

— In 1947 I went to Haamstede and from there in 1951 to Oude en Nieuwe Wetering which was exchanged for Kampen in 1956 which congregation I served for ten years.

— So you combined Amsterdam and Kampen! Will you tell me something about your pastorate in Kampen?

— I liked the work there very much. It is stimulating to have contact with so many professors and students, I must admit that the professors are much more gentle in their criticism of the sermons than the students. But, I guess, this is the same for every generation.

During my stay in Kampen some changes began to take place. We got our first married students. If such student marriages are economically possible, I feel that they are to be welcomed. But you know too that young marriages have their own range of various problems. In this way I was often engaged in pastoral care when I visited the students and not only in theological talks. Keep in mind that in Kampen we did not have a campus minister.

— But now you are back in Amsterdam. Could you tell me a bit about your work there?

— With pleasure. It was a big change from provincial Kampen to metropolitan Amsterdam. My ward or parish is in the inner city. In part this section of the city is very beautiful: architecture of the 17th century, you see many canals, bridges and old step-roofed houses. Yet another part of my parish is waiting for demolition. We would like to be engaged in what you call a coffee-house mission. I am jealous seeing all these beautiful basements under churches (of course, at this time we were still in Grand Rapids, R.K.). I would have a good location for such work among children and young adults in and near our church, but the difficult problem is to raise the necessary funds.

— Do you have other problems as well in your pastoral work?

— Yes, it is very difficult to find the needed number of office-bearers. In our inner city congregation we hardly have people belonging to the age group of 30 to 55 years. We have many older members and many young adults who are either single or married and after marriage stay with our parish for a period of one or two years. In this way I have 500 adresses for 1000 members. For this reason I am happy to mention that we have indeed also some women in our parish consistory!

— I am impressed by your description of your congregation. It strikes me how similar your problems are to the ones I face in my congregation of Toronto I, although we have not (as yet) called women into the consistory. Another point is that here we often hear quite alarming reports about the churches in the Netherlands. Is the spiritual life there shriveling up?

— I don't think it would be right to formulate it in that way. Of course, there are changes. You think of the well-known synodical report about the *verschraling* or the emaciation of faith and spiritual life. We think now that the report was not quite correct. The Synodical report tried too hard to evaluate new situations with traditional standards. In this way you don't get a correct picture. It is true that our young people find it very difficult to develop new views and new patterns of functioning, especially since they are not too sure anymore that the traditional ones are relevant. Among the younger ones there is much discussion and also much criticism, yet you must also notice a deep involvement in the relationship of the church to the world. Our young people are active, they work along, be it in their own way. Compared with the preceding generation, they talk more about the Gospel with the unbelievers than was done in the past. Yet apart from this, you will meet among the younger ones also much insecurity and much doubt, whereas others again are very critical of the present-day (Christian) society.

— Is there lively interest in what is happening in the immigration countries, especially in the Reformed churches there?

— The interest in countries like Australia and Canada certainly has shifted. Since there are not too many who consider emigration for themselves, the interest is now directed to the question how the Reformed churches in the Immigration countries react to our present problems. In the Netherlands we are vitally interested in the apartheid policy of South Africa and in how the other Reformed churches in other countries react to this. We will listen with great interest to your answers to urgent problems like the war in Vietnam, the race issue and the nuclear armament.

— Many of our people here are disturbed about what is called *new theology*. Many are afraid that it is the camouflaged return to the old Modernism of the beginning of this century.

— It would not be right to say this. The old Modernism was negative: you don't have to believe this and that, you may reject this story and that book, etc. But the new theology is positive. It tries to understand the Scriptures. It asks: what is the message of this part of the Scriptures for us today? This is a good emphasis.

— Is there any further development in the relation of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* to the *World Council?*

— Yes, our relationship to the World Council is a dynamic one. It changes and developes continually. First, we gave up our dogmatic objections, but now, after Uppsala we wonder whether the one-sided interest for social and political issues as displayed at the last meeting of the Council, is not a serious objection for becoming a member of this organization. We have no objections any more against the confessional basis-formula of the World Council. It becomes more clear that also smaller churches can take meaningfully part in the discussion in the meetings of the Council. It is for this reason that I still feel that we must participate in the deliberations.

— Do you expect that the *Gereformeerden* and the *Hervormden* in the Netherlands will unite in the near future?

— I don't think this will take place very soon. Many things must change yet, especially in the *Hervormde kerk*. However, locally the relations often are very good and in many cases there is much closer contact than before. In the Netherlands we feel the need for unity and the guilt for the division of the church is much stronger than in the U.S.A.

— De Pacifists have a place in the Gereformeerde Kerken?

— Mainly among the younger ones the conviction becomes more predominant that the so-called ABC weapons (atomic - bactery - chemical) cannot be and ought not to be a means of maintaining justice. The response of the churches is that they are increasingly willing to help the conscientious objectors to modern warfare in all possible ways.

— After all these different questions let us return once again to the more straight-theological problems. Would you give me your opinion on the historicity of Genesis?

— I am very sorry that Kuitert has used the expression *teaching model* for the beginning chapters of Genesis. This expression fails to do justice to the historical character of the fall. In its decisions of 1967 Synod just has underlined this historical character. Scripture states that this fact took place once in history, even though we are not able to reach detailed conclusions as to the date and other particulars of this event. We know of this fact from a story which is poetical in character.

As far as Kuitert is concerned, I do hope that he, since he rejects the theology of Bultmann and Tillich, will soon exchange the unhappy term *teaching model* for a better one.

We all feel that we meet many difficult problems in dealing with the authority of Scripture and the nature of the inspiration; it is clear that we will not be able to come up with instant solutions to all these problems.

— What is your impression of the Christian Reformed Church?

— I have seen much of which we may be very envious. Your system of cell-division which results in a growing number of congregations, each of which has its own church building and pastor, promotes much activity throughout the entire congregation and denomination. I admire your work in Home Missions, Foreign Missions and in many others aspects. I appreciate very much your increasing interest in the social problems we face as Christians and I do hope that we may learn much from the answers you intend to give as to the nature of the authority of Scripture.

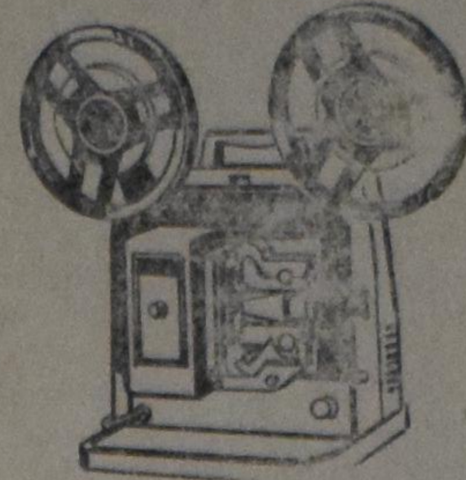
And so we came to the end of our long talk. I thanked Dr. van Swigchem, "Douwe", on your behalf for his carefully formulated answers and wished him God's blessing upon his homeward way and upon the interesting task that was waiting for him.

You should know that Dr. van Swigchem was a member of the committee which prepared the (majority) report for the Synod 1967 of the Gereformeerde Kerken on the decisions of 1926.

Hence his word carries quite some weight when he assures us that that synod wished to stress the historical character of the fall, refering o.a. to Romans 5 and the beginning of the Heidelberg Catechism.

R. Kooistra

Movies WITH MEL



THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Although I find war movies somewhat nauseating because war is revolting, we did go to see **The Battle of Britain** because the alternative was choosing one of the "skin flicks".

The movie tells the story of Hitler's attempt to conquer England during the early part of World War II. After the rout of Dunkirk, Hitler expected Britain to acknowledge defeat. When England did not sue for peace, Hitler ordered Goering to start mass air attacks on England on August 12, 1940. At that time the Germans had 3,242 combat planes to the British 1,350. Trained pilots were an even more severe problem for the British. As the commander of the British Air Force soberly put it, "We'll have to shoot down four of their young men for every one of our young men they shoot down to just stay even."

Although England had no reserve pilots, it did have a fairly advanced radar and radio telephone system. The British fighter planes, the Spitfire and the Hurricane, were faster than the German planes and could inflict more damage. Goering began to lose when he ordered the planes to bombard London instead of carrying through his more effective original plan of destroying all the airfields first. He made another tactical error when he ordered his planes to fly in formation where the British fighters could attack them with ease. By the latter part of September the Germans realized that they did not have air superiority over England. A few hundred pilots had saved England from being conquered. The movie tells the story of — in Sir Winston Churchill's words — "Never before in the course of human history have so many owed so much to so few."

Technically the film is well made. The film-maker follows the well-known story faithfully. It is vividly told in splendid colour. The list of actors is impressive — many big names who act their roles well. Many vintage planes were assembled for this production — it surely would warm the cockles of an airplane buff's heart. The aerial photography is really magnificent.

The story follows the sequence of the Battle of Britain alternating between the German and English sides, with emphasis given to the British, of course. The film gives an air of authenticity by having the German conversation dubbed in English sub-titles. The heavy-handed Teutonic efficiency is played up somewhat. The Germans obey rigidly; the British disobey successfully. The human interest story lies, of course, with the British. One of the RAF officers, a pilot-trainer, has trouble with his headstrong wife who wants to pursue her own career with the air force rather than move with him. At the end of the film he was shot down but managed to bail out of the burning plane.

The courage of the pilots on both sides is shown. It is the desperate courage of a raw recruit sent up to fight in the air with only nine hours of Spitfire flying experience. It is the fearful courage of men trapped in a flaming airplane and trying to bail out. Some of the shots are gory — most of the blood is lost by the Germans, however. There is an unnecessary repetition of shots focussed on the German fliers who are suddenly hit by British bullets. **The Battle of Britain** does focus on the carnage of war: the almost gaudy effect of a burning London seen from the air catches your breath, the whistling sound of a bomb on its way to destroy people quickens your pulse, the violent flash and scattering debris of an exploding bomb tenses your body as the film-maker intended. War is hellish.

But the movie does celebrate war too. It is an epic poem singing of bravery. It is not a classical "I sing of men and arms" to be sure. The cost of war is reckoned to some extent. The Battle of Britain is actually remarkably low-keyed and restrained. The movie does not exult in blood and gore. Many shots are understatements. Most of the American war films and even westerns seen on T.V. are much more violent. But nevertheless the picture does celebrate a barbaric event. The pilots are seen as heroes — tired, wounded, dirty but victorious. It was perhaps necessary to stop Hitler in this way, but to celebrate the destruction of people to me seems truly pagan.

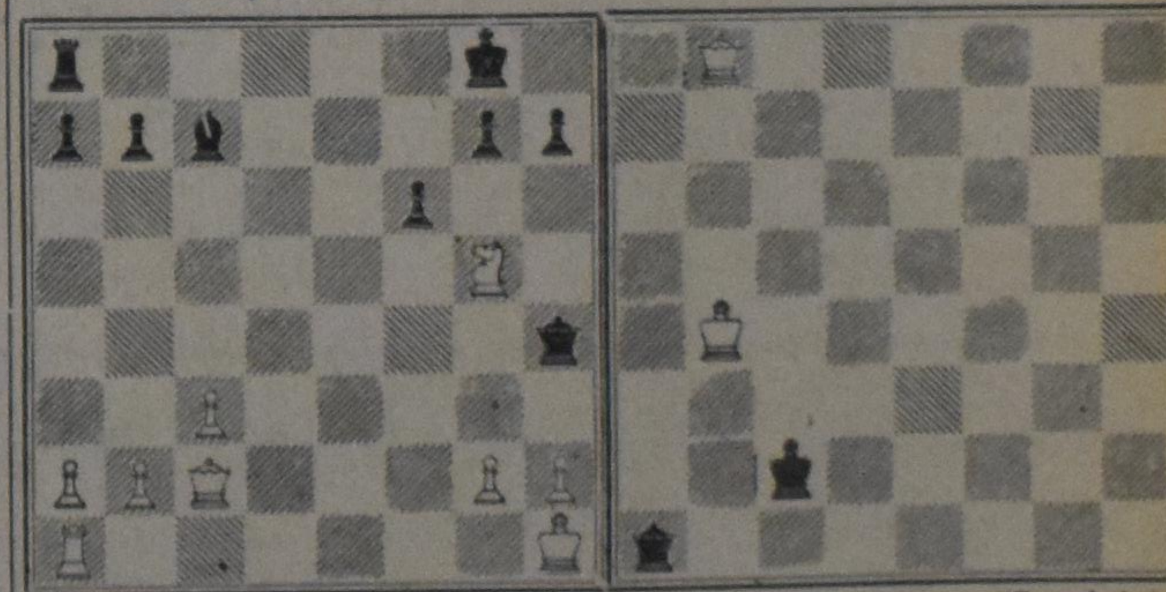
Mel Huizinga.

Let's Play Chess

Editor Mr. C. HESS

FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT

XIX	XX
Anonymous author	Author: Lolli



White wins. (3 points)	White wins (7 points)

NOTES

1. No. XIX can be decided by an excellent combination. You should play as if they are the last moves in a regular game. What would be your first move in this position?
2. No. XX offers still more help in practical chess. Usually King and Queen versus King and Queen mean nothing else but a draw. In this case, however, both the black King and Queen are in a bad position. That is why white is able to mate the black King. How this should be done, is your problem.
3. Points are not available for our regular contestants. Only newcomers, who also send in solutions of the regular November problems, may make a better start by solving these endings too.
4. The deadline is December 20. For others than Ontarionians December 26 (postmarked).

CLASSIFIED ADS

Pay your advertisement when you send it in. See our standard-rates below:

Birth-announcements	$4.00
Engagement-announcements	$4.00
Marriage en anniversaries	$6.00
Notifications of death	$5.00

"For Sale" and "Want" advertisements up to 30 words $4.00. Every word more 15¢.

For "letters under number" 50¢ extra.

Send your payment together with your ad to:

Calvinist-Contact
Box 312, Station B,
Hamilton, Ont.

With thanks to the Lord and great joy we announce the birth of our third son

HENRY ARMAND

A brother for Corneil and Gregory Peter.

Mr. & Mrs. M. Van Der Spek.

2390 Lakeshore Road, W.,
Clarkson, Ont.

November 3, 1969.

Thankful to the Lord Who made everything well, we are happy to announce the birth of our son

ANDREW GEORGE

Born November 4th, 1969.

Dick & Ann Attema.
Tina, Rita,
Eddy, Chris,
and Ricky.

R.R. 1, St. Ann's, Ont.

The Lord entrusted in our care another son, and brother

KEVIN HERMAN

Born January 30, 1965.

Mr. & Mrs.
Herman Rustenburg.
Paul, Christine and Glenda.

122 Central Ave.,
Beamsville, Ont.

Mr. & Mrs. R. VanderBoor of Willowdale, Ont. are pleased to announce the marriage of their daughter

TINA
to
Mr. JOHN BERKHUIZEN

son of Mr. and Mrs. John Berkhuizen of Belleville, Ont.

The ceremony will take place D.V. on Friday, November 21st, 1969 at 7.30 p.m. in the Willowdale Chr. Ref. Church.

Rev. L. Slofstra officiating.

Future address: 4776 Yonge St., Willowdale, Ont.

10 Centre Ave.,
Willowdale, Ont.

On November 16, 1969 we hope to celebrate with our parents:

CORNELIUS CAHAIS
and
FONNY CAHAIS—BROUWER

the occasion of their 40th wedding anniversary.

May God bless them together for many years to come, is the wish of their children.

Ike & Nellie Cahais,
West Rouge, Ont.
Bill & Ruth Cahais,
Orono, Ont.
Piet & Nancy Cahais,
Bramalea, Ont.
John & Renie Legemaate,
Scarboro, Ont.

and 14 grandchildren.

Address: 970 O'Connor Dr., Apt. 101, Toronto 16, Ont.

1929 — 1969

The Lord willing, on November 21, 1969 we hope to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary.

We thank the Lord for these happy and blessed years of marriage and ask His blessing for the years to come.

HARMEN KOENEN
TJITSKE KOENEN,
nee WOUDSTRA

Opportunity to congratulate will be on Friday evening, November 21, First Chr. Ref. Church Hamilton, from 8.30 to 10 o'clock.

R.R. 2, Hamilton, Ont.

Interested in buying Farms?

DAIRY - BROILERS - LAYERS

We have established an agreement with large companies for financing and contracts. For details phone 757-3641 or write to

JOHN MASSELINK,

WILLIAM ALLEN

Real Estate Limited - Realtor
1698 Eglinton Avenue East,
Toronto 375, Ontario

On November 21st, 1969, the Lord willing, we hope to celebrate the 35th wedding anniversary of

WILLEM VAN DYK
and
JOHANNA VAN DYK—RENSEN

That the Lord may spare them for many more years to come, is the prayer of their children and grandchildren.

Rotterdam, Holland:
George & Gerda.
Burlington, Ont.:
Pete & Ebby.
Burlington, Ont.:
Bill & Barbara.
Victoria, B.C.:
Ben & Reta.
Victoria, B.C.:
Bob & Hilda (engaged).

70 Ward Ave.,
Hamilton, Ontario.

On Friday, October 31, 1969 our Heavenly Father in His infinite wisdom took my dearly beloved wife

RUTH MARY,

at the age of 21.

"And after I go and prepare a place for you. I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am." - John 14:3.

Jim Baker.

373 James Street,
Clinton, Ont.

It pleased God in His wisdom to take suddenly unto Him our beloved daughter and sister-in-law

RUTH MARY BAKER,
nee BYLSMA,

at the age of 21 years; and since June 28, 1969 the dear wife of our son and brother Jim Baker.

Mom & Dad,
Goderich.
Freda & Albert Snippe,
Georgetown.
Clara & Renso Meyer,
Lambeth.
Wayne & Evelyn Baker,
Georgetown.
Clarence & Betty Baker,
Georgetown.
John & Agnes Baker,
Georgetown.
Agnes & John Bylsma,
Kingston.
Cathy Baker,
London.
Bob Baker,
Lindsay.

Psalm 36:9, "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light."

R.R. 2, Goderich, Ont.

October 31, 1969.

The Consistory of the Christian Reformed Church of Georgetown expresses its deepest sympathy to Mrs. J. Fokkens, her sons and their families at the sudden death of their husband and father

JOHN FOKKENS,

at the age of 66 years.

He served our church many years as elder and treasurer and will be remembered by us for his cheerful and dedicated christian service.

May our Lord prove to the widow and the family, that He is our only Comfort in life and death.

Revelation 14:13.

For the Consistory:
Al. J. VandenPol,
chairman.
Henry Dykstra, clerk.

Op vrijdag 7 november 1969 nam God tot Zich onze geliefde vader, groot- en overgrootvader

JIMME KEIZER,

in de gezegende ouderdom van 83 jaar. Sinds 22 mei 1951 weduwnaar van Eeuwkjen Veldstra.

A. Keizer,
S. Keizer—Bangma,
Grassie, Ont.
M. Koene—Keizer,
A. Koene,
Naaldwijk, Z.H.
G. Brouwer—Keizer,
F. Brouwer,
Glencoe, Ill. (U.S.A.).
B. Keizer,
A. Keizer—Holtrop,
Joure, Friesl.
A. Akkerman—Keizer.
J. Akkerman,
Baarn (Utrecht).
K. Keizer,
Y. Keizer—de Jong,
Rottum (Friesl.).

Wanted:

A GIRL

to share apartment with same. Hamilton. Call: 383-5178.

The Calgary Christian School is accepting applications for a

GRADE 5 TEACHER

commencing in January or the beginning of February. For further information, please contact Mr. G. Vanderveen, Principal, 2839 - 49th Street S.W., Calgary 8, Alberta.

For rent: Small but neat

BUNGALOW

Forced air oil heated. Nice front- and backyard (fenced). Single car garage. On paved road. Canboro-area, North of Dunnville. $100.— per month. Phone 416-822-1367.

Wanted:

COMPANION

for elderly Dutch lady, weekends only will be considered. Working lady willing to be companion some evenings will have room and board free. 20 Miles from Toronto. Letters # 2217, % Calvinist-Contact, P.O. Box 312, Stat. B, Hamilton, Ont.

ORGAN FOR SALE

Schober Recital. 2 Manuals, full pedal (A.G.O.). 33 Stops and 6 Kopplers. Reverberation. All woodwork in teak finish. In excellent condition, very suitable for church.

H. PILON,
253 Drewry Avenue,
Willowdale, Ont. Tel. 221-5444.

Dairy Farm

200 Acres, Wellandport Area, 65 head of Holstein Cattle, 45 milking cows, 20 heifers, 807 lbs. daily milk quota. Large barn and silo. Full line of excellent machinery, mostly new. Good 11-room home with conveniences. Asking $85,000 with $25,000 down payment. Owner will take home as part down payment.

Fruit Farm

81 Acres of sandy soil, Fonthill Area, 43 acres planted to grapes, balance in pears, complete line of equipment. Has extra large 2-storey home in spotless condition. This is a well-kept farm with a good income. Asking $125,000. Substantial down payment required.

For more information on these and many other good farms,

Call: — DICK SCHOUTEN
416-892-2310
representing

Reg. W. **HOPKINS** Ltd.
REALTOR
85 Russell Ave. Evenings 684-9837
684-6328
ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

R. G. TURNER

REAL ESTATE BROKER
Dial 426-3681
SIMCOE - ONTARIO
191 Queensway, West.

Three family farms — To be sold as one unit or separate.

FARM NO. 1 — 100 acres, 75 acres cleared, suitable for beef, 1 loafing barn, machine shed, good water supply, 4-bedroom house, 4-pc. bathroom, oil furnace.

FARM NO. 2 — 95 acres, suitable for dairy cattle, 2 new silos, new drive shed, dairy barn with stable cleaner, 84 tie-ups, and water bowls, paved barn yard, 3-bedroom house, 3-pc. bath, oil furnace, good water supply.

FARM NO. 3 — 98 acres, no buildings. These farms are well drained, fall wheat in, balance ploughed. These adjoining farms are located on paved road near Christian Reformed Church and bus routes, located 3 miles North-East of Caledonia.

CAGE LAYERS - BROILERS - TURKEYS

If you are considering buying (or selling) a poultry or other income farm, talk things over with Fred Bray, first. No obligation — but lifetime experience gives him a knowledge of values and wealth of contacts few men can match.

Samples from turkey list: 1 — Modern 30,000 square feet turkey barn, modern 8-room home, 10 acres, Niagara Peninsula. 2 — 104 acres, 26,000 square feet for turkeys, range equipment, farm machinery, large home.

FRED W. BRAY
REAL ESTATE BROKER
357 Upper Paradise Road,
Hamilton 43.

Phone (416) 389-0344

Write or phone ford efinite appointment.

Poultry Farms

Broilers. 39,000 quota. Excellent barns. Modern bungalow. Ideal location. $155,000. Good terms.

19,000 quota. 2 Storey barn. Automatic. 47 acres. Modern home. $89,000.

34,000 quota. 2 modern barns. 30 acres. 8-room house on highway. $140,000. Large first mortgage at 8%.

Turkeys

17,000 capacity. 25 acres. Two modern barns. Excellent bungalow, plus small second house. $112,000.

13,000 capacity. One barn. 12 acres fruit. Queen E. location. Brick bungalow. $87,000.

Layers

10,000 in cages. 5 acres. Good house, plus good barn for hogs. $55,000.

29,000 in cages. Automatic feeding. 14 acres. Good house. $125,000.

Hog Farms

600 feeders capacity. 30 acres. Good barns. Large house. $40,000.

250 hogs plus 6,500 turkey barn. 3 acres. Good house. $36,800.

11 Acres. Ideal located on two paved roads. Hog barn for 100. Could be enlarged. 2-storey house. $31,500.

Ask for information on all kinds of dairy farms, with large milk quotas.

Write or call

Gerrit Otten
416 - 563-7904
(collect)
BEAMSVILLE, ONT.

Rep.
ART BRUNTON
REAL ESTATE BROKER
416 - 945-5409
GRIMSBY, ONT.

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia

want to draw the attention of Reformed people to the

Job Opportunities

for supervisory personnel wanted by the MICHELIN TIRE factory, which will be built in this area (Pictou).

See the newspapers for the particulars or ask us for it. In the coming year more jobs will be available for skilled and unskilled labour.

For more information write to: P.O. Box 115, New Glasgow, Nova Scotia.

THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE . . . . .

to buy large size **PSALTER HYMNALS** at the old price
(the new price went into effect several weeks ago)
only until our present stock (which we bought at the old price) **is sold.**

Old price: Can. $2.75. New price: Can. $3.25. YOU SAVE ONE HALF DOLLAR (plus postage).

CHURCHES / SCHOOLS / SOCIETIES / CLUBS / CHOIRS:

YOU WILL SAVE AT LEAST $2.50 when ordering 10 copies or more. (OUR PRICE Can. $2.50 each.)

YOU WILL SAVE AT LEAST $17.50 when ordering 50 copies or more. (OUR PRICE Can. $2.40 each.)

AGENTS: COMPARE WITH Can. $2.75 if ordered from the Publishing House in Grand Rapids (besides the trouble you might have at customs, and the higher freight charges from the U.S.)

AND:

IF YOU WISH WE WILL IMPRINT YOUR NAME ON EACH PSALTER HYMNAL IN GOLD at the following additional charges:

1-9 Psalter Hymnals	$1.00 each
10-49 copies	35 cents each
50-99 copies	20 cents each
100 and over	10 cents each

Do not wait too long . . . . once the present supply is sold, new prices MUST apply.

FB **THE FAMILY BOOKSTORE**
Your Christian Education Centre
468 BRANT STREET, BURLINGTON, ONT. PHONE (416) 637-9151

Filmavonden

"De stem van het water"

19 November, ST. CATHARINES, ONT., Polish Hall, 8 p.m.

21 November — OWEN SOUND, ONT. in the Chr. Ref. Church.

22 November — PETERBOROUGH, ONT. in the St. Mary's Auditorium.

27 November — ST. THOMAS, ONT. in the Armoury Arena.

Alle verenigingen worden in de gelegenheid gesteld om de ontroerende film "De Canadezen Komen" als na-programma op te nemen. Deze film is gratis, doch een collecte voor het Comité 1940/1945 of een vrije gift zal zeer op prijs worden gesteld.

MAAK GEBRUIK VAN DEZE UNIEKE GELEGENHEID!

Telefoon (daytime) 459-3711
's avonds (na 8 uur) 457-1119

HOLLAND FILM SERVICE
Brampton, Ont.

Groot dubbel stenen huis in Jarvis, Ont.

4 grote kamers beneden met een badkamer, 4 kamers boven met badkamer. Het kan verhuurd worden. Nieuwe plumbing door het gehele huis. Garage. Mooie grote tuin. $26,000 vraagprijs, $7,500 down.

Jack Bylsma
REALTOR
1607 King St. East, Hamilton, Ont.
Phone LI 9-3894

CAGE LAYERS

28,000 capacity. 15 acres land. 4-Bedroom 1½ storey house, gross income $26,000.00 Contract available to the right buyer.

For more information call

JOHN VANDER PLOEG
ADAM DOPKO
REAL ESTATE LIMITED
(REALTOR)
GRIMSBY — 945-5429

HOLLAND SHOPPING CENTRE
559 - 6th Street — New Westminster, B.C.

wants per January 1st, 1970

EXPERIENCED SALESLADY (full-time)

in our Delicatessen store annex Gift shop (includes souvenirs, records, baby clothing etc.). Must be bilingual (Dutch and English). Write in own handwriting (Dutch or English) to Mrs. H. L. F. de Haas, manager.

Dairy Farm

300 Acres, has approx. 2 miles of frontage. 140 head of cattle, 3,000 lbs. daily quota, milk house with 2 bulk coolers, 4 milking machines, 3 tractors, full line of excellent machinery. Large loafing barn and hay barn built 7 years ago. 1½ storey brick and frame house has a large living room with a fireplace, 3 or 4 bedrooms, basement and sunporch.

This house was built in 1954. There is also a second older house and barn. This farm can be bought with or without livestock and equipment.

For more information call

Rep. JOHN VANDER PLOEG

ADAM DOPKO
Real Estate Limited (Realtor)
Grimsby, Ont. - 945-5429

— KOOPT BIJ ONZE ADVERTEERDERS —

Brief from the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools

Continued from page 1

has not given the problem of its responsibility to educational systems other than the "public" system the SERIOUS attention it deserves. At least no such SERIOUS DELIBERATIONS have been shared with us. This apparent indifference is increasing the frustration of supporters of O.A.C.S. affiliated schools to the point that we are taxed in our efforts to restrain them from becoming more militant. To date we have been able to discourage those bent on storming Queen's Park with 8,000 school students and those favouring a more militant protest of injustice by assuring them — as we have been assured on numerous occasions — that "The Government is looking into the matter". This assurance sounds "hollower" by the day unless we are able to give the member schools the honest assurance that this Government is giving serious attention to what we consider a grave injustice of fundamental importance our quiet protests may well become noisy demonstrations.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IS ONLY OPEN TO THOSE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO WISH TO HAVE THEIR CHILDREN EDUCATED IN THAT SYSTEM WITH ITS PARTICULAR EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY. It is not to be denied that Roman Catholics, for example, have the LEGAL right but not the MORAL freedom as they are conscience bound to educate their children in a system in harmony with the world-and-life principles they inculcate in their homes. So it is with those parents who send their children to the christian schools affiliated with the O.A.C.S. These society-controlled, non-denominational, christian public schools are open to all those members of the public who wish to have their children educated according to that system's particular educational Philosophy. THE CHRISTIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM AND THE SEPARATE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM ARE THEREFORE AS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AS THE SYSTEM LEGALLY DESIGNATED AS THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.

It is frequently argued that christian schools are religiously biased schools which further the cause of a particular private religion. They are therefore labelled private schools. Few people conversant with the schooling process yet defend the public school system as a neutral value-free system. Many attempts, however, are made to picture the public school system as a system where the value judgments made are reasonably acceptable to the majority of Ontario residents. They are therefore labelled public schools. Even if there were such homogeneity of opinion — and there is not — as is evident by the existence of eight school systems, five political parties, and twenty-two different church denominations in Ontario, surely the number of persons embracing the educational philosophy of a particular educational system does not determine the public or private status of that system. Surely in a FREE SOCIETY the majority would not wish to foist its value judgments on minorities under the guise that minority beliefs are private and majority beliefs are public. IF ONE LABELS CHRISTIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS RELIGIOUS BIASED SCHOOLS, AS BOTH ADVANCE THE RELIGIOUS VALUE JUDGMENTS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE SUPPORTERS. However desirable some may consider the existence of a public educational philosophy, and however vigorously they may contend that secular humanism or non-sectarianism is such a public value, the truth is that all educational philosophies are as private or as public as one another. IT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS THAT THE STATE VIOLATES ITS ROLE IN EDUCATION WHEN IT USES PUBLIC TAX DOLLARS TO FINANCE ONE PUBLIC OR IF YOU WILL, PRIVATE VIEW OF EDUCATION AND REFUSES TO FINANCE OTHER PUBLIC, OR IF YOU WILL, PRIVATE VIEWS OF EDUCATION.

John A. Olthuis,
9 Charnleigh Court,
Rexdale, Ontario.

Growth

No word can describe better the subjects of the Board of Trustees meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship. Report upon report showed us growth, and growing problems. We may be thankful for the growth, but we should not lose sight of its problems.

In his opening word on October 14, chairman Rev. J. Joosse spoke some words in memory of Prof. Kouwenhoven, one of the founders of our Association, who did so much for reformational life in our area.

Between the opening words early Tuesday morning and the closing remarks late Thursday night, we heard and discussed many reports dealing with specific areas of activities. As you know the most important activity is the operating of the Institute, the beginning of a Christian University. At the moment the Institute has about 100 students, 10 of which are full-time. Now is the time to consider the internal organization. If we don't watch it and just keep growing, the danger is great that the University will be formed after the image of what we see around us. That means, that then the basic reason for starting the University has disappeared. A Christian University is not just a place, where one learns a trade. It is a community directed by Christ, towards Christ and we must show that, even in organizing a curriculum, and consequently in the organization, the internal relationships between the departments. That results in some professors being hired and others not. Preliminary discussions about the needs for next year were held.

The unexpected fast growth will have its consequences in more respects. For example financially it will cause a few difficult years. As long as we don't offer a complete program, we cannot charge real costs. We are going to study the possibility of charging later the real cost of operating the Institute. Maybe it is not going to be possible anyway. After all post-graduate study usually has small classes. The first few years will, however, be especially difficult financially. To pull us through we need the faithful praying and paying of all our members.

Teaching staff, finances, building, reformed student centre, all these things together were discussed. Growth was faster than ever anticipated. We must go on in faith. We must act in view of the growth, which we now may see. Plans were made, but these plans will have to be studied carefully now. Watch for further news.

Not only did we see tremendous growth in the operating of the Institute, but another area of our activities, our conferences, experienced the same kind of growth. As Board we were especially glad to see that, because it means that more and more people are becoming aware of the need of Christian higher education. Six conferences were held: Bolton, Ont.; Edmonton, Alta.; Cultus Lake, B.C.; Seattle, Wash.; Grand Haven, Mich.; and Philadelphia, Pa. Next year we hope to add conferences in Manitoba, Illinois and Iowa.

One of the complaints we heard about some of our conferences was the difference in background knowledge. That made discussions sometimes a little difficult. The unity of faith exists and is indeed experienced, but the benefits to each individual conferee might have been even greater. Next year we hope to try to have better structured discussion groups and we intend to add one of the conferences, Bolton if possible, a special day for graduates.

Our publications sold better during the last year. We intend to reorganize this area of activity in such a way, that it will be self-supporting, while at the same time our publications must be pushed. What we publish should not be dictated by any commercial motive, but only by spiritual motives. Only in that way the publications of the A.A.C.S. will serve the purpose of advancing Christian Scholarship.

In an effort to reach the supporters of our movement better previous board meetings had started the organizing of the general lectures series "Discovery I". The October meeting only heard a report that the initial response was tremendous. Do you go to "Discovery I"?

The finanicial organization needs a closer scrutiny as well. It used to be so, that most of the money came in regular as membership dues. Now the membership dues are only a part, even though still an important part, of our income. We have some financial difficulties, which would be wiped out, if only everyone, who promised to pay did so faithfully. For 1968 and 1969 alone we are $22,000.00 behind in dues. This is money, which was promised for the work of the Association. **Delinquent members, please pay what you promised.**

The internal organization needs to be improved. In a way, we get the impression, that on the local level people think, that we have arrived, and that now only the paying of a little money every now and again is required. There is more to it than just that. Just paying is not being involved, often. The "Discovery" lectures try to improve it. Is it enough? Should we reorganize local chapters and regions? Here too, more study is needed.

As you see, lots of problems were referred to specific study committees. We have not arrived yet. We need help. If you have a worthwhile contribution to make, or a suggestion, contact your area member or head office at 141 Lyndhurst Ave. in Toronto.

Jan de Koning.

